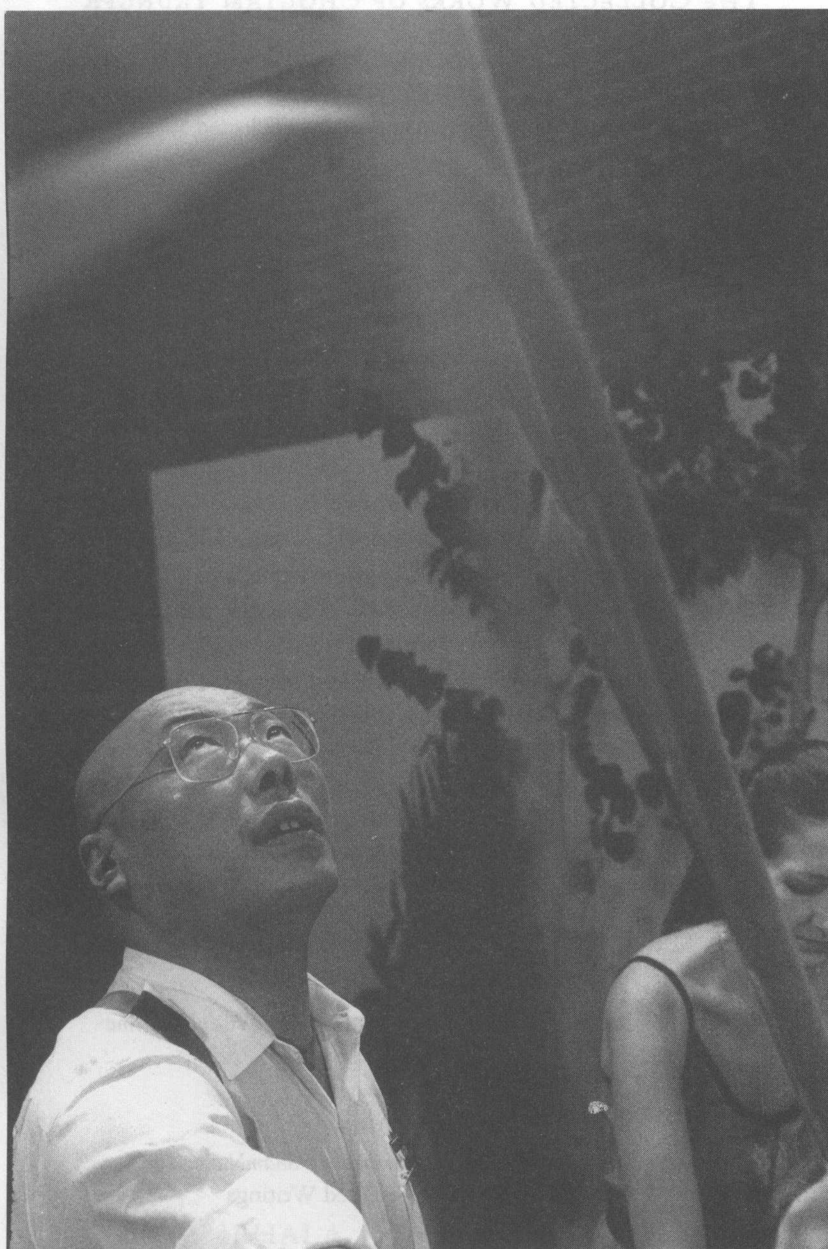
THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

Chögyam Trungpa



Volume Seven

The Art of Calligraphy (*Excerpts*)
Dharma Art
Visual Dharma (*Excerpts*)
Selected Poems
Selected Writings



The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa

VOLUME ONE

Born in Tibet • *Meditation in Action* • *Mudra* • Selected Writings

VOLUME TWO

Glimpses of Abhidharma • *Glimpses of Mahayana* • *Glimpses of Shunyata* • *The Path Is the Goal* • *Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness* • Selected Writings

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Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism • *The Heart of the Buddha* • *The Myth of Freedom* • Selected Writings

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
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VOLUME SEVEN

The Art of Calligraphy (Excerpts)

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EDITED BY

Carolyn Rose Gimian



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Page i: Chögyam Trungpa creating a flower arrangement for an exhibition,
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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME SEVEN

VOLUME SEVEN OF *The Collected Works* brings together Chögyam Trungpa's work as a poet, playwright, and visual artist and the teachings on art and the creative process that he gave during his seventeen years in North America, from 1970 until his death in 1987. Chögyam Trungpa's appreciation for and involvement with art are among the most innovative and provocative parts of his teaching in the West. There is also material in Volume Seven that one might call "art history," in which Trungpa Rinpoche shares his knowledge of the symbolism and iconography of traditional Buddhist art and music. All of this produces a rich tapestry of color, form, and sound, which enlivens and deepens our appreciation of this highly creative and prolific human being.

Rinpoche's artistic orientation was something of a departure from the traditional view of the place of art in Tibetan Buddhism. In the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, art is largely connected with monastic life. Formal poetry was composed for Tibetan liturgies, and dohas, or spontaneous poems and songs of spiritual realization, were very much respected. Thangkas, or scroll paintings, and rupas, sculptures, were created to depict vajrayana deities and gurus, as aids to tantric visualization. They were created in an environment of sacredness, and painters and sculptors often performed a sadhana, or ritual practice, to begin their work. Music was also involved in many liturgies, and dance was an important part of some tantric rituals. So the monastic culture was not without poetry, music, and art. In contrast, there was relatively little secular art or literature within the Tibetan culture as a whole, with the notable exception of the great epic of Gesar of Ling and some folk art, literature, dances,

and songs. In some respects, the relationship of art and religion in Tibet was similar to that of medieval Europe, where so much of the music and fine arts was religious in nature. Obviously, there are important distinctions between the two, because Buddhism is a nontheistic religion. The deity in Buddhist art has a very different function, since it is viewed as a quality of emotion and energy discovered within the practitioner's own mind. In some respects, however, art, music, and dance in the Middle Ages in Europe appear to have been less dominated by a religious outlook than they were in Tibet. There were court dances and musicians, as well as landscape and portrait artists. This does not seem to have been the case to any great extent in Tibetan culture.

The reason for raising this point is not so much for the sake of historical or anthropological argument, but rather to highlight how radical it was for Chögyam Trungpa to have developed the relationship he had with the arts in the West. His view and practice of artistic disciplines were much more closely allied with the approach taken to the arts by Buddhism in Japan. In *Dharma Art*, a collection of his talks on art and the artistic process, he himself says: "The cultural attitude is that there is no secular art in Tibet. If you're going to paint even a free-style thangka, the subject has to be a religious one: different gurus, different deities, and different protectors. So in Tibet you can't have too much of a free hand; whereas in the Zen tradition of China and Japan, often people depict secular art in the language of Zen" (p. 39).

Trungpa Rinpoche's own monastic training in Tibet did include an exposure to many of the religious arts practiced there. He pursued a rigorous study of monastic dance but had to leave the country before he completed his training. His root guru, Jamgön Kongtrül, trained him in the composition of dohas, and Trungpa Rinpoche spent many hours reading and studying the sacred poetry of the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. He had a particular love for the songs of realization composed by the great Tibetan yogi Milarepa, and the Nyingma master Jigme Lingpa was perhaps his favorite poet.[1]

As a small child, Rinpoche was fascinated by the work of craftsmen at his monastery. His secretary and bursar at Surmang Dütsi Tel Monastery arranged for the renovation of the apartment of the tenth Trungpa

1. Chögyam Trungpa's poems in *The Rain of Wisdom*, which appear in Volume Six, are examples of poetry in the traditional Tibetan style.

(Chögyam Trungpa was the eleventh), who had been a very austere man with simple tastes. Sixteen wood carvers and painters were hired to redecorate the quarters. In *Born in Tibet*, Rinpoche reports how he was enthralled by their work and how he and one of the workers' sons "liberated" some paints to make pictures of their own. Later in *Born in Tibet*, Rinpoche talks about a visit he made to the Karma Monastery, which had been the seat of one of the Karmapas and was renowned for its thangka paintings. He admired the paintings greatly but also noticed a decline in the quality of more recent works and hoped "that it might be possible for me to do something to revive Tibetan art, but Communist oppression was soon to put an end to any such dreams."[2] It does appear, however, that Rinpoche received some training in the discipline of Tibetan thangka painting, although this editor has been unable to find any description of it. In the 1960s in India, he created a few very beautiful thangkas, which combined traditional elements and technique with his own unique vision.[3]

Rinpoche arrived in India in 1960, having made a ten-month journey through the Himalayas on foot to escape the communist Chinese. His first contact with Western literature came in India. In the preface to *First Thought Best Thought*, a book of his poems, he describes his wonder at encountering the contemporary Western approach to poetry at a poetry reading sponsored by the American women's club: "I was very struck by the reading, which I recall included works by T. S. Eliot. This was not hymn, chant, mantra, or prayer, but just natural language used as poetry" (pp. 605–606) In the same preface, he recounts his excitement at running across a "simple and beautiful haiku" in a magazine he was reading one day in New Delhi. He was just in the early stages of learning the English language at that time, and he reports, "It may have been an advertisement for some Japanese merchandise or it may have been a piece of Zen literature, but I was impressed and encouraged that the simplicity of its thought could be expressed in the English language" (p. 605).

2. *Born in Tibet* (1977), p. 87.

3. In India, he made the acquaintance of Tendzin Rongae, a master thangka painter. Rinpoche became close friends with the entire Rongae family. It may be that his training as a painter came out of this association. One of Tendzin's sons, Noedup Rongae, has produced many important thangkas that hang in shrine rooms throughout the Shambhala community.

Rinpoche apparently had other artistic interests in India. Ato Rinpoche, a colleague of Trungpa Rinpoche's there, has reported that Chögyam Trungpa made small dharma art–like arrangements of rocks and greenery in terrariums while in India.[4]

In late 1963, Rinpoche traveled to England on a Spaulding Scholarship at Oxford University. There, he was immersed in the Western literary and artistic traditions, which made a huge impression on him. In the preface to *First Thought Best Thought*, he describes the impact of an encounter with Western music:

> Poetry, linguistic expression, and music are identical as far as I am concerned. Once I was taken to the college chapel by my dear friend Mr. John Driver to hear the *St. Matthew Passion*. This was such a great discovery, experiencing the tremendous heroism and spiritual passion in that atmosphere of sanctity, that I felt as though the occasion were my private feast. From the beauty of the music I gained further appreciation of the Western legacy. A Tibetan friend who also attended felt nothing of the kind. His reaction was that "we had three boring hours listening to the noise of tin cans, pigeons, and chickens getting their necks wrung." I felt so energized as we came out into the chill of the English night that my friend panicked and thought I was in danger of being converted to Christianity! (p. 606)

In England Rinpoche continued his study of the English language, which had begun in India. He took evening classes in English offered to foreign students by the town of Oxford. In later years, in describing his study of English pronunciation to his students, he often recounted how he was made to say the word *policeman* over and over. At Oxford itself, Rinpoche studied Western history, art, religion, thought, and culture. While in England, he also embarked on his own practice of Western artistic and literary disciplines. He wrote many poems in Tibetan and also penned his first verses in the English language, a number of which are included here in Volume Seven. Others were published in 1972 in *Mudra*, which appears in Volume One. They tended to be much more formal or orthodox than later poetic efforts, and it appears that they

4. Interview with Ato Rinpoche by Carolyn Rose Gimian for the Shambhala Archives, circa 1991.

were written out rather than recited spontaneously, the method of composition for almost all of Rinpoche's poetry written in the English language in America.

While living in England, Rinpoche wrote his autobiography, *Born in Tibet*, with an Englishwoman, Esmé Cramer Roberts, as his editor (see Volume One). It was his first book published in the West. Although it is not unusual for a Tibetan teacher to write an autobiographical account of his life, the style of *Born in Tibet* is nothing like a Tibetan account of a teacher's life.

Chögyam Trungpa took his first photograph in Tibet; we know this because he brought it to the West with him. It is a powerful portrait of his root guru, Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen.[5] During Rinpoche's lifetime, it hung on the shrine in the meditation center he founded in Boulder, Colorado. When Rinpoche conferred the Vajrayogini abhisheka, he had a huge reproduction of this photograph placed on a throne in the shrine room. He kept a copy of the photo in his bedroom, and in the last years of his life he said that he saw a rainbow-colored light coming from the heart center of Jamgön Kongtrül. In India, Trungpa Rinpoche took some very small-format photographs that are kept now in the Shambhala Archives in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They are pictures of sacred places in India, such as Bodhgaya, as well as pictures of other Tibetans, mainly lamas, who appear to have been Rinpoche's friends or traveling companions.

Having taken these early "snapshots" in India, Rinpoche in England made his first photographic studies of landscapes, buildings, trees, and space, among other subjects. The Shambhala Archives has inherited a

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5. Chögyam Trungpa described how he took the photograph of Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche: "I was able to acquire a box camera in Tibet, and I got film and chemicals to develop film from China, and I took this very photograph by myself. I asked him, 'Can I take your photograph?' He said, 'You don't need to do that,' and I said, 'I insist,' and he said, 'In that case, let me dress up.' So he got his best brocade gown, shawl, and robe, and he sat in the upstairs of his house on the flat roof, and he said, 'All right. Ready. Do it.' . . . I was nervous about whether it was going to come out properly or not. But fortunately it came out. I took this photograph—what year could it be?—it's probably 1954 or something like that. A friend of mine, another tulku, another rinpoche, showed me how to develop the film. So I took this photograph, and I developed it and printed it in his monastery's library, which is a rather dark place. We put cloth over the window, and we developed the film by trial and error, and the photograph came out all right." (*Collected Vajra Assemblies*, vol. 1, edited by Judith L. Lief and Sarah Coleman [Halifax: Vajradhatu Publications, 1990], p. 187.)

number of prints of Rinpoche's photographs from England. One interesting collection shows a number of shots of two ruins in the English countryside, photographed in the spring when the rhododendrons were in bloom. There are pictures of each building taken from the perspective of the other; architectural details, wide pans, shots of flowers, and views of the sky in relationship to the forms. Clearly, he had discovered photography as art.[6]

In England, Rinpoche made a much more direct connection with Zen and the arts. He studied flower arranging for several years with Stella Coe, a high-ranking teacher of the Sogetsu school of ikebana in England, who reported that he had a natural talent that did not really need to be trained.[7] It was a discipline he would continue throughout the remainder of his life. While still in England, he made his first brush and ink drawings inspired by Japanese brush painting. About ten years ago, I was shown copies of some of the drawings he did in England, and it was striking how accomplished his technique already seemed.

In Japan, Zen developed a very close relationship with the "fine" arts and beyond that with the practice of many other disciplines as "arts" in their own right. Even beyond art, the Japanese developed a sense of one's activity or disciplines as a "way," or *do: chado,* the way of tea; *kyudo,* the way of archery; *kado,* the way of flowers, and so on. It is a common Buddhist understanding that ordinary activities can be a form of meditation in action; or, put another way, that one can bring mindfulness and awareness to bear on anything one does. But the idea of a *do* or way is that one's conduct of secular, everyday activities can become the means to realizing a sacred outlook and can be a path to awakening, a path even to enlightenment. Whether or not Trungpa Rinpoche first encountered this idea in England, it is clear that he understood and embraced this approach later in life, as we shall see.

Somewhere in the course of his early encounters with Western art and literature, whether in England or when he first came to North America, Chögyam Trungpa also came to an understanding of the role of contemporary art in the West as a source and an expression of spiritual

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6. This group of photographs is a good visual example of how Trungpa Rinpoche was working with what he later described as seeing and looking. See pages 138–139 for the discussion of this principle of dharma art.

7. See *Kalapa Ikebana Newsletter,* Winter 1984, pp. 1–2.

inspiration and sacred view. In his approach to translating Buddhist terms and concepts into the English language, as was discussed in the introductions to Volumes Two and Six, he found that the vocabulary and ideas used in Western psychology were better suited to the expression of Buddhism in the West than language with an overtly religious tone. Similarly, "secular" Western art, music, and literature have for more than a century communicated sacredness and an uplifted view—giving us access to beauty, profundity, and wisdom. Of course, one can still be moved by the religious music of Bach or Brahms, by the majesty of Chartres, or by medieval paintings of Christ and the saints. We have not lost touch with the inspiration evoked by such religious art, and many modern artists continue to create works of art with religious content. However, most contemporary art, while it may be deeply spiritual, is not confined or defined by religious themes, and contemporary artists frequently do not turn to overtly religious symbolism and themes to convey their deepest longings or their most direct experience of reality. However, although art has become largely disconnected from an overtly religious iconography, message, or subject matter, it has remained a deeply spiritual medium, often with a greater ability to move us and nurture our spirit than organized religion seems to possess. Chögyam Trungpa grasped this from early on in his tenure in the West.

While this secular evolution within art is not a particularly new or radical understanding for most of us in the West, for Chögyam Trungpa it must have required a considerable reorientation, given the tradition out of which he came. In his country, there were the equivalents of Michelangelos and Leonardos still painting the walls of monasteries. Yet the secularization of the arts in the West does not seem to have been a difficult or unpleasant discovery for him. He apparently embraced the freedom of Western art and beyond that the possibilities for using the arts as a vehicle to communicate a sacred view of everyday activity and to provoke inquisitiveness and wakefulness in his Western Buddhist students.

Rinpoche's ideas about the relationship between art and spirituality came out of his direct involvement with the arts. He had been practicing calligraphy and flower arranging and writing poetry for a number of years before he had much to *say* about those disciplines. Many of Rinpoche's talks on art and the artist have been gathered together and presented in *Dharma Art*, edited by Judith L. Lief and published in 1996. The

book is based on material presented by Chögyam Trungpa over nearly ten years, from 1972 through 1981. Interestingly enough, the editorial approach in *Dharma Art* is itself rather artistic—in some ways more like a painting than the usual systematic presentation made in a book. The volume presents a number of themes as highlights that overlay one another to create a complex and interconnected fabric. It begins with a letter written by Rinpoche on the occasion of the Naropa Institute's first summer program in July 1974. The remaining chapters are, with few exceptions, based on talks given by Rinpoche in courses at Naropa and in dharma art seminars and other gatherings with artists held in many locations around the United States. About half of the material is based on talks given at Naropa, many of these taken from a seminar called "The Iconography of Buddhist Tantra," held in the summer of 1975, in which Chögyam Trungpa articulated not only his first systematic take on dharma art itself but also a view of how human perception operates and how it is refined through the development of meditative awareness. Such awareness, both panoramic and detailed, can then be applied to any artistic enterprise as well as to the general conduct of "Art in Everyday Life," the title of one chapter of the book. There is also a consideration of symbolism, not just as it applies to art but as a component of all human experience.

The first chapter, "Dharma Art—Genuine Art," defines dharma art for the reader. The opening paragraph gives us the first part of the definition:

> The term *dharma art* does not mean art depicting Buddhist symbols or ideas, such as the Wheel of Life or the story of Gautama Buddha. Rather, dharma art refers to art that springs from a certain state of mind on the part of the artist that could be called the meditative state. It is an attitude of directness and unselfconsciousness in one's creative work.

The last sentence of the letter, and of the chapter, gives us the second part of the definition of dharma art: "Genuine art—dharma art—is simply the activity of nonaggression." These two components of dharma art are reflected throughout the talks that Chögyam Trungpa gave on art and the artistic process. The first aspect—that dharma art is a reflection of the meditative state of awareness—is expressed in many different

ways throughout his work. Chögyam Trungpa did not articulate a series of principles that related to art as opposed to other activities in life or other aspects of his teaching. I think it would be more accurate to say that he applied principles of dharma—which refers both to basic truth and specifically to the buddhadharma, or the doctrines of Buddhism—to the understanding and execution of art. He also let the art speak directly for itself—and he used and refined the understandings that arose from his art to communicate with his students. He made use of his own artistic expressions to convey to his students how he saw the world. In his dharma art seminars, Rinpoche often gave demonstrations of calligraphy and flower arranging and had poetry read, or composed on the spot. Artistic expression was a means for him to demonstrate aspects of the immediacy and depth of perception that words fail to convey. This communication was not just aimed at other artists: art was a means of communicating with everyone in his life.

In May of 1979 I traveled throughout the province of Nova Scotia with Rinpoche and a group of his students. Rinpoche brought his camera with him and took pictures as we toured around. One afternoon while we were driving on the North Shore of the province, we took a dirt road down to a tiny fishing pier, which a battered sign proclaimed as "McDonald's Cove." It was a gray day, the water and the sky both appearing dull and dirty to me. We looked at the water and the lobster traps on the pier and talked with a few fishermen. Rinpoche casually snapped some photographs. A few weeks later, when I saw the slides from that afternoon, I was particularly struck by his shots of the water, by the luminous quality of these photographs and the nuances of color, form, and light that he had captured. I realized that he and I were seeing very differently when we looked at the same things. I could feel wonder, depth, and delight in his pictures, as compared with the monotony and dismal tones of my own memories of that day. Once, for a charity auction to raise funds for some good cause in the Buddhist community, Rinpoche contributed a pair of his glasses to be auctioned, so that the successful bidder, as he put it, "could share my vision." When I saw his photographs of a fishing cove in Nova Scotia, I knew exactly why one would want to do that!

Although his art spoke for itself in these ways, he also used the *discussion* of dharma art to talk about how one might develop that perceptiveness in oneself. In part, he often conveyed a very simple message: you

need to meditate if you want to understand or create dharma art. "Absolutely nobody can become a good craftsman or a good artist without relating with the practice of meditation" (p. 31) That might sound like a limiting definition of art, leading one to ask, "Can only Buddhists become artists?" However, he follows up this statement with a clarification of what he means by meditation:

> For instance, Beethoven, El Greco, or my most favorite person in music, Mozart—I think they all sat. They actually sat in the sense that their minds became blank before they did what they were doing. Otherwise, they couldn't possibly do it. Just coming out of the market and plopping down at the dining-room table and writing a play—that's impossible. Some kind of mind-less-ness in the Buddhist sense has to take place. (p. 32)

Trungpa Rinpoche often talks about that open space of blank mind that precedes artistic creation, or is its first step, as "first thought best thought." "First thought" is an evocative term for the primordial ground of disciplined spontaneity that he recommended as the best approach—in fact, the only genuine one—to writing poetry, executing a calligraphy, or embarking on any artistic project. He also developed this concept in early seminars on the Buddhist teachings, particularly in the exposition of the teachings of mahamudra from the tantric tradition, and later in many lectures on the Shambhala principles of warriorship and enlightened action. In *Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala*, Rinpoche connects first thought with the discovery of a dot in space that wakes up the warrior:

> Whether you are confused or in a neutral state of mind or your mind is full of subconscious gossip, in any case there is always space. The dot in space is what we call first thought, best thought. In the midst of preoccupations, in the middle of your shower, as you put your pants on, while you dry your hair, while you cook your food, in the midst of all sorts of neutral states of being, the dot is a sharp point that jerks you, shakes you. You are quite easily going through your life, quite naively, and suddenly there's a jerk out of nowhere. First thought, best thought. . . .
>
> By practicing . . . you develop the capability to bring about *the*

> first thought. Sometimes your so-called first thought is filled with aggression, resentment, or some other habitual pattern. At that point, you're experiencing second thought rather than the real first thought. It's not fresh. It's like wearing a shirt for the second time. . . . That is like missing the first thought. First thought is fresh thought. By practicing . . . you bring about the fresh first thought.[8]

However, it was in the realm of art that Rinpoche first used the phrase "first thought best thought." This is a good example of how art influenced dharma in his presentations—not just the other way around. In the chapter "State of Mind," in *Dharma Art*, Chögyam Trungpa talks about first thought as a "sense of vision taking place in one's state of mind. Such vision comes from a state of mind that has no beginning and no end. It is very present, on the spot. . . . First thought does not come from subconscious gossip; it comes from before you think anything. In other words, there's always the possibility of freshness" (p. 137).

In many of his presentations of the Buddhist teachings, Trungpa Rinpoche was pointing out that essential nature of mind which is free from doubt, fear, or concept. It comes back over and over again in his teachings on art. He also demonstrated or evoked that state of mind through various displays. He was able to create a flower arrangement, a logo, a calligraphy, a photograph, or a jewelry design that stopped your mind in its tracks. A friend of mine once showed me a ring she was wearing that had been designed by Chögyam Trungpa. When I looked at it, it took my breath away and I burst into tears—for no reason at all. I had the same experience looking at the paintings of Monet. Isn't this an essential quality of art—that it does not allow us to rest in the comfortable world of our subconscious gossip but evokes a fresh and immediate experience?

Gina Etra Stick, an architect and designer who worked with Trungpa Rinpoche for many years on various design projects and was instrumental in organizing the education component of the dharma art programs taught by him, commented on how first thought came into their design work together:

> As with most things with the Vidyadhara, design work happened in profoundly simple ways. A design session would go something like

8. *Great Eastern Sun* (2001), pp. 152, 154.

this. We would sit down, and he would say, "We have to do a logo" for such-and-such business. We would hang there for a few minutes, space pregnant. Each of us would try to sense the essence of the particular business involved. We would try to find what I call the seed syllable: the most basic energy underlying that particular activity. In our Shambhala world, all activities, institutions, or businesses begin with the logo, the pin, the seed syllable. This is the basic utterance out of which all of the multitude of details of a business venture arise. Rinpoche would then say, "What do you think?" I might say, "Seems like red to me." He might say, "Ya, red with purple undertones." Or, "Actually, I was thinking green." We would communicate that way, not saying much, to the point where our minds would meet. This was very intimate, personal, playful, and fun. The Vidyadhara loved to design. In fact, later in his life, the only two things he never delegated were the hiring of key personnel in the organization, and design.

Sometimes we would dance around with "first thought best thought" as our modus operandi or design methodology. In this design process, one relaxes to allow a gap, then relaxes more to allow the first thought, the first inspiration that arises, to express itself. The first thought or inspiration is considered the best, because it is the freshest, occurring *before* thought. This design process requires a lot of bravery to stick with your first thought and not rely on convention, concept, or something safe. This type of design often provokes an abrupt shift in the viewer as it provokes in turn their return to original or first mind. So you can see that the design process as well as the result were ways of mind training. For me, these sessions directly wired me into the Vidyadhara's way of thinking, and his spectacular way of not thinking.[9]

Gina Stick also sent me some comments on the work that she did with Chögyam Trungpa on the design of the *Garuda* magazines, which were annual or semiannual publications between 1971 and 1977. Shortly after his arrival in North America, Trungpa Rinpoche began putting together the first *Garuda*, which presented articles on themes connected with meditation and Buddhism, many penned by himself but by others as well. (Many of the original articles from the *Garuda* magazines are

9. E-mail communication from Gina Etra Stick to Carolyn Rose Gimian, 2002.

included in *The Collected Works*.) There was also news about what was happening in the Buddhist community in each issue of *Garuda*. There were five issues of *Garuda* published in total. The first two issues were large format, 8½ by 11 inches; the last three were in an unusual format of approximately 8½ by 9 inches. The *Garudas* were also uniquely designed, so that the visual presentation of the material was as important and powerful as the written content. Of the design work on *Garuda*, Gina Stick commented:

> The Vidyadhara designed the *Garudas* with a methodology called "first thought, best thought." . . . First thought, best thought refers to our first inspiration arising from original or first mind. Designs created in this way in turn provoke a glimpse of original mind in the viewer.
>
> In contrast to traditional book design where page layouts usually adhere to a standardized format, here the idea was that each two-page spread would be new, reading provoking a sort of shock, a gap, and a new realization. These books hang together with a different kind of logic: a dharmic logic, a continuity and rhythm of change. Turning the page, you are turning the mind, back, to original mind, and forward, in nowness. Design is not decorative: it is a vehicle of practice, teaching, and awakening. So each page is fresh, with each page the reader is fresh, able to see the image and logos directly.[10]

Toward the end of his life, Trungpa Rinpoche was fond of hiding behind doorways and jumping out to surprise an unsuspecting passerby with a huge exclamation that was close to the ghostly "Boo!" He was particularly delighted if he could make someone shriek or jump into the air. At times, he incorporated the "Boo! transmission" into his dharma talks, startling whole audiences into wakefulness at the most unexpected moments. The ability to bring things to one extraordinary point from the midst of silence and spaciousness was a fundamental gift that he had and which he gave to his students, in many different ways. In part, this was the teaching of first thought best thought.

Rinpoche also used the principle of heaven, earth, and man (in the sense of humanity) in his development of the principles of dharma art.

10. Written communication from Gina Etra Stick to Carolyn Rose Gimian, January 2002.

This threefold principle comes from the Chinese tradition and was also integrated and developed further in Korea and Japan. Rinpoche would have known this threefold view of the world from his studies in Tibet, and he would also have applied this concept in his studies of flower arranging, or ikebana, where it is commonly used to describe the elements of an arrangement. Beginning around the time that he began to focus on the Shambhala teachings, Rinpoche chose to apply this schema in dharma art presentations. He treated the topic in a number of different ways. Relative to the discussion of first thought, the heaven, earth, and man material in his essay in *The Art of Calligraphy: Joining Heaven and Earth* is particularly germane. In the section of his essay entitled "Creation," heaven is presented as the first step or stage in creating a work of art. Here, he connects heaven with vision, or nonthought. The experience of heaven is like standing in front of your huge blank canvas, holding your brush, ready to paint:

> At that point you become frightened, you want to chicken out and you do not know what to do. . . . [Or] you might have blank sheets of paper and a pen sitting on your desk, and you are about to write poetry. You begin to pick up your pen with a deep sigh—you have nothing to say. . . . That first space is heaven, and it is the best one. It is not regarded as regression, particularly; it is just basic space in which you have no idea what *it* is going to do or what *you* are going to do about it or put into it. This initial fear of inadequacy may be regarded as heaven, basic space, complete space. (pp. 185–186)

Rinpoche goes on to talk about how first thought arises in that space:

> Then as you look at your canvas or your notepad, you come up with a first thought of some kind, which you timidly try out. You begin to mix your paints with your brush, or to scribble timidly on your notepad. The slogan "first thought is best thought!" is an expression of that second principle, which is earth. (p. 186)

Finally, he says, you have the man principle, which is the confirmation of both the panic of heaven and the first thought of the earth principle. "At that point there is a sense of joy and a slight smile at the corners of your mouth, a slight sense of humor. You can actually say something about what you are trying to create" (ibid.).

A brief essay included in Volume Seven, "Heaven, Earth, and Man," is accompanied by calligraphies that illustrate this principle. Here, Chögyam Trungpa connects this threefold approach with the Buddhist principle of the three kayas, which he describes as "an old Buddhist tradition of perception based on threefold logic." He goes on to describe the kayas in relationship to art: "The tantric art of Tibetan Buddhism uses the element of dharmakaya as the background of manifestation, sambhogakaya as the potential of manifestation, and nirmanakaya as the final manifestation." The calligraphies that accompany the text, along with Trungpa Rinpoche's commentary on each one, give us a playful view of the heaven, earth, and man principles and how they can spark one's creative expression in open and unexpected ways.

In terms of understanding how we perceive the world, as the basis for the creation of art, Trungpa Rinpoche also talked about another concept: seeing and looking. In the "State of Mind" chapter of *Dharma Art* he talks about seeing as the first principle: cutting your thoughts, projecting your mind, and seeing things as they are. Then it is possible to *look* at the details or explore further. Confoundingly enough, in his essay in *The Art of Calligraphy*, he states just the opposite, that the artist's inquisitiveness begins by looking, the starting point that then allows one to *see*. He says here that looking represents prajna, or discriminating awareness, while seeing is the expression of jnana, or wisdom. Both approaches seem to make sense. Switching the order of seeing and looking seems contradictory only if one fails to recognize that Chögyam Trungpa was not primarily interested in creating a *philosophy* of art or a systematization of artistic theory. He was struggling to communicate the nuances of human perception: how intelligence arises in space, how it communicates with and grasps the sensory world, and how a human being can provoke that fresh perception through artistic creation.

In brief, then, the principles of first thought best thought; heaven, earth, and man; and looking and seeing were ways in which Chögyam Trungpa elaborated on the application of meditative awareness to perception and more specifically to the creation of dharma art. The second part of his dharma art letter in 1974 was the definition of dharma art as the activity of nonaggression. This is a theme that runs throughout all of his presentations on art and the artistic process. He was very critical of art that arises from an aggressive or violent state of mind. In this regard, he criticized artistic eccentricity purely for its own sake and self-

centered art that glorified the artist's ego. He felt that violent art was quite dangerous. As he wrote in the chapter "Meditation" in *Dharma Art*, when you create violent artwork:

> You are creating black magic, which harms people rather than helps them. . . . Creating a work of art is not a harmless thing. It always is a powerful medium. . . . It challenges people's lives. So there are two choices: either you create black magic to turn people's heads, or you create some kind of basic sanity. Those are the two possibilities, so you should be very, very careful. (p. 36)

If, on the one hand, Chögyam Trungpa advocated dharma or meditation as a prerequisite for genuine art, he also emphatically taught the importance of artfulness and the application of awareness in the conduct of one's life. Well before he began presenting the Shambhala teachings, which introduced the ideas of cultivating self-respect, elegance, and fundamental richness in one's environment, he introduced this idea of art in everyday life—the extension of artfulness in one's day-to-day conduct of life and one's moment-to-moment relationship with the world.

At the 1973 Vajradhatu Seminary for his advanced students, he gave an extraordinary talk entitled "Art in Everyday Life," which makes up the chapter by that name in *Dharma Art*. Here he brought together both sides of the equation—art equals awareness equals art—in a discussion of how awareness practice, or vipashyana, relates both to everyday conduct and to the actual creation of art. He talked here about awareness as overcoming "fundamental, phenomenological clumsiness and crudeness." In that sense, awareness is the antidote to aggression. Or, put another way, practicing mindfulness and awareness gives one the ability to develop a nonaggressive relationship with one's perceptions and one's world. In "Art in Everyday Life," Rinpoche also discussed how art itself "in the transcendental sense" becomes "the real practice of awareness, or vipashyana." At this level, he said, the artist becomes a bodhisattva, someone completely dedicated to helping others, "which is the highest, most supreme society person," which can be understood here as the person engaged in society or engaged in their culture. This was the germ of the articulation of art as *do*, a *way* of awakening, not just an isolated activity.

This idea of art as a *do* or path seems to underlie much of his work

in the arts in America, particularly in the later years, when his attention was focused on the Shambhala teachings on warriorship and society. As we shall see later in the discussion, he created multifaceted dharma art experiences for people, which brought together a broad audience of practicing artists and practicing meditators, incorporating lectures and discussion groups on dharma art, demonstrations and exhibits of art, exercises to work with principles of dharma art, and art installations that were conceived of and directed by Rinpoche, but which incorporated the efforts of as many as a hundred students. Art as an activity that utterly transforms your life and the lives of others was a message he communicated in many ways.

So far, the discussion of Chögyam Trungpa's view of art and creativity has focused largely on the artistic process: how one looks, how one sees, how one creates. However, he also talked a great deal about *what* one sees if one looks at the world with awareness. The world in fact is speaking for itself all the time, proclaiming itself, and through awareness the artist—and the practitioner—can contact and appreciate the self-existing messages that arise from the world. That is the meaning of nontheistic symbolism.[11] As Trungpa Rinpoche says in *Dharma Art*:

> The basic notion of nontheistic symbolism is that whatever exists in our life—our birth, our death, our sickness, our marriage, our business adventure, our educational adventure—is based on symbolism of some kind. . . . Symbolism usually comes as messages. It is a very simple eye-level relationship: me and my world. . . . There is always some kind of message taking place. What message? We don't know. It's up to you. There's not going to be a fantastic dictionary or encyclopedia. This is simply a reminder that every activity you are doing—smoking cigarettes, chewing gum—has some kind of meaning behind it. (pp. 45, 47)

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11. I would like to thank Fabrice Midal for pointing out the importance of Chögyam Trungpa's discussion of symbolism. He sent me a copy of remarks he made at a conference, entitled "Le symbolisme dans le bouddhisme tibétain," in which he quotes Trungpa Rinpoche's remarks on symbolism in *Dharma Art* and then comments: "Le symbolisme, montre-t-il, n'existe pas indépendamment de notre expérience. En réalité même elle est notre expérience." Roughly translated, this comment reads: "He [Chögyam Trungpa] shows us that symbolism does not exist independent of our experience. In reality, it is no other than our experience."

In the vajrayana Buddhist perspective, which is the basis for this understanding, symbolism is not something impersonal. It is deeply personal, connected to our existence and to our nonexistence, as Rinpoche points out:

> People's usual idea of symbolism is that it is something outside them, like a signpost or billboard, that gives them signs, perhaps of religious significance. That's not quite true. Symbolism is connected with your self, your inner being. In other words, you are the biggest symbol of yourself. That is symbolism. . . .
>
> There are two basic understandings of symbolism: the theistic and the nontheistic. Theistic symbolism is a constant self-existing confirmation; that is, whenever symbolism exists, you exist and your world exists. In the case of a nontheistic symbolism such as Buddhism, you don't exist, symbolism doesn't exist, and the universe doesn't exist. That's quite shocking! "How do we go beyond that?" you might ask. But we don't actually go beyond that. Instead of trying to go beyond it, we try to get into it. (pp. 44, 45)

According to Rinpoche, symbolism itself is also a path, not just a result: "Symbolism is a question of gaining new sight. It is being extremely inquisitive to see things in their own nature, not always wanting to change things." Through his or her appreciation of symbolism, the artist participates in and connects with a sacred world. Sacredness is both part of the process and part of the outcome: what the artist sees and experiences. Through the process of appreciating the inherent symbolism of reality, the artist sees the world as a sacred place, and his or her activity becomes sacred activity. Rinpoche often talked about this as connecting with basic goodness and as experiencing and creating harmony and richness. He also connected it with the artist's role in the creation of enlightened society. In an interview about one of his dharma art installations, "Art of Simplicity: Discovering Elegance," he said, "Dharma art is the principal way we are trying to create enlightened society, which is a society where there is no aggression, and where people could discover their innate basic goodness and enlightened existence, whether it is in a domestic or political or social situation" (p. 686).

We turn now to the specific consideration of the artistic disciplines that Chögyam Trungpa worked with in America. In looking at the vari-

ous disciplines that Rinpoche both practiced and taught about, we will see more about the development of his ideas on art and creativity.

Poetry

When Chögyam Trungpa arrived in America in 1970, he had been writing poetry for many years. In "Tibetan Poetics," a 1975 conversation with Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman, which was published in 1976 in *Loka II: A Journal from the Naropa Institute*, Rinpoche talks at length about the classical style of Tibetan poetry in which he was trained and how it used very formal language, metaphors, and set line lengths. He compares the classical poetry with the more colloquial style employed by Milarepa and other great spiritual teachers to convey what Rinpoche calls "songs of their own experience." He also describes his own approach to writing poetry in Tibetan in the West, in which he continued to employ classical line lengths, as well as some use of rhyme and puns. He contrasts his Tibetan poems with the approach he adopted to writing in English: "I just regard the poems that I write in English as finger painting, in my mind." The vast majority of the poems he wrote in America were written in English in this free style, influenced more by the poets he met in America than by the classical training of his upbringing.

Rinpoche encountered the American poetry scene soon after he arrived in the United States. He and Allen Ginsberg ran across one another in New York in 1970.[12] Rinpoche and Ginsberg encountered one another as they were both trying to hail the same taxicab in Manhattan. Ginsberg was introduced to Rinpoche by one of Rinpoche's companions, while they were standing on the street, and upon learning who Rinpoche was, Ginsberg spoke the Vajra Guru mantra of Padmasambhava, "OM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM," and clasped his hands in a traditional bow or salutation. Rinpoche, who was with his wife, Diana, and their companion invited Ginsberg and his ailing father to share the cab. After dropping Ginsberg's father at his apartment, they continued on to Allen's place,

12. Neither one of them seemed to remember that they had first met in the early sixties at the Young Lamas School in New Delhi. Ginsberg only realized this "pre-meeting" had taken place after Rinpoche's death, when Ginsberg looked at a photograph of himself being shown around the Young Lamas' School and realized that Trungpa Rinpoche had been his guide.

where they stayed up into the night talking, writing poetry, and becoming friends. When later they knew each other better, Ginsberg asked Rinpoche what he thought of being greeted by this mantra, and Rinpoche replied that he wondered whether Allen had known what he was talking about.[13]

This chance meeting led to an enduring friendship, collaboration, and a teacher-student relationship. On the Buddhist front, Rinpoche was the teacher, Ginsberg the student; on the poetry front, Rinpoche acknowledged how much he had learned from Ginsberg, and Ginsberg also credited Trungpa Rinpoche with considerable influence on his poetry.

Ginsberg introduced Chögyam Trungpa to many other poets, some of whom became longtime friends and students. Rinpoche's interactions with the poets were sometimes explosive affairs. In 1972, a poetry reading was organized in Boulder, with Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Robert Bly, and Nanao Sasaki sharing the stage with Chögyam Trungpa. While Bly was reading, Trungpa Rinpoche put a huge gong over his own head and hammed it up so that the audience dissolved into laughter rather than paying attention to Bly's reading. Bly and Snyder were furious, attributing Rinpoche's behavior to alcohol. They left and were never again part of any poetry scene that had anything to do with Rinpoche. Rinpoche himself later said that his actions were meant to cut through the self-righteous and self-serious attitude displayed by some of the poets at this reading.[14]

In 1974, Rinpoche invited Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman to teach at the first summer session of the Naropa Institute. The Jack Kerouac School of Poetics (originally "of Disembodied Poetics") became a founding department at Naropa. Ginsberg remained affiliated with Naropa until his death in 1997; Anne Waldman, though now based in New York, continues her affiliation with Naropa and travels to Boulder to teach in the summers and several times throughout the year. In its first two summers, Naropa attracted an impressive group of writers who collaborated, read, and taught there. "Poets' Colloquium," from a gathering in 1975,

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13. Allen Ginsberg, *Spontanteous Interviews: 1958–1996,* edited by David Carter (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), p. 381; © 2001 by the Allen Ginsberg Trust. See also David Rome's comments in the Editor's Preface to *First Thought Best Thought.*

14. See Samuel Bercholz's remarks on this occasion in the publisher's foreword to Volume One.

originally published in *Loka II*, shows the freewheeling and spirited discussion among Rinpoche, Ginsberg, Waldman, William Burroughs, W. S. Merwin, Philip Whalen, David Rome, and Joshua Zim. The discussion ranges over a variety of topics: why and how the poets write poetry, whether to take a typewriter into retreat with you, whether a poet writes for an audience, and whether a conscious death is possible. Ginsberg and Whalen compose poems on the spot; Merwin remembers one to share. In the fall of 1975 at the Vajradhatu Seminary, Merwin and Rinpoche had a huge falling out, which drew considerable negative publicity.

Rinpoche discussed his relationship with American poets in his Preface to *First Thought Best Thought*:

> I have met many American poets. Some are like coral snakes; some are frolicking deer; some are ripe apples; some are German shepherds who jump to conclusions whenever a sound is heard . . . some are like mountains, dignified but proclaiming occasional avalanches; some are like oceans, endless minds joining sky and earth . . . some are like lions—trustworthy, sharp, and kind. I have confronted, worked with, learned from, fought and fallen in love with these American poets. All in all, the buddhadharma could not have been proclaimed in America without their contribution in introducing dharmic terms and teachings. . . .
>
> I would like to thank Allen Ginsberg . . . and I would also like to thank all the poets in America who contributed to this book—either positively or negatively. As is said: a month cannot happen without new moon as well as full, light cannot shine without shadows. My profound gratitude to everyone. (pp. 606–607)

I do not think his expression of gratitude was facetious. Indeed, he cared enough about American poetry and the American poets to work with them, love them, confront them, and fight with them.

Chögyam Trungpa's poetry is altogether intimate communication, conveying in a very personal voice his insights into his perception, his experiences and relationships, and his aspirations. One could gain almost an entire—and unique—history of his time in North America and how he viewed it purely by reading and reflecting on his poetry. The poems offered in Volume Seven of *The Collected Works* come primarily from two

large collections edited by David I. Rome: *First Thought Best Thought: 108 Poems*, arranged chronologically and published in 1983; and *Timely Rain: Selected Poetry of Chögyam Trungpa*, organized thematically and published posthumously in 1998.[15] Other poems included in *The Collected Works* first appeared in small-press editions.[16] A number of poems from the *Loka* magazines are also appended, including a long poem recited spontaneously by Rinpoche and Allen Ginsberg. *The Collected Works* also includes poems published in the *Vajradhatu Sun*, the *Shambhala Sun*, the *Garuda* magazines, and in other periodicals and newsletters.

Allen Ginsberg and Chögyam Trungpa shared many years of personal, poetic, and spiritual collaboration. Both Ginsberg and Waldman took part with Rinpoche in several panel discussions and poetry readings at Naropa. Ginsberg contributed the Introduction to *First Thought Best Thought*. He encouraged Rinpoche to speak out about his ideas on poetics, inviting him to talk to Ginsberg's classes at Naropa. "Poetics," which appeared in the *Shambhala Sun* in 1993, was based on a discussion among Trungpa, Ginsberg, and Rome that took place in Ginsberg's Meditation and Poetics course at Naropa in 1978. Here Rinpoche talks about using a threefold logic of ground, path, and fruition in writing poetry and says that "obviously poetry comes from an expression of one's phenomenal world, in the written form." "Dharma Poetics" from *The Heart of the Buddha* (see Volume Three) presents another discussion from one of Allen Ginsberg's classes in 1982.

The creative interactions between Allen Ginsberg and Chögyam Trungpa gave rise to the famous concept of "first thought best thought." In an interview with Paul Portuges in 1976, Ginsberg commented that

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15. Many poems appear in both collections.

16. John Castlebury, a student of Trungpa Rinpoche's and a poet himself, has for many years published *Windhorse*, a journal of poetry, which he began in Boulder, Colorado, and moved to Nova Scotia, Canada, in the early 1990s. A number of Chögyam Trungpa's poems appeared in various volumes of *Windhorse*. In 1997, for the tenth anniversary of Trungpa Rinpoche's death, John published an entire issue of *Windhorse* dedicated to the poetry of Chögyam Trungpa, as well as his talks and panel discussions on poetry. A number of poems from *Windhorse* are included in *The Collected Works*. David Rome, James Gimian, and I also put together two posthumous volumes of Rinpoche's poetry: *Warrior Songs* and *Royal Songs*. *Warrior Songs* was handset in letterset type; both small volumes are fine, cloth, small press editions of poetry, available in limited editions. David Rome and I did the editing of both volumes; James Gimian was the publisher and actually did the typesetting of *Warrior Songs* himself, together with Mr. Dawson at the Dawson Print Room of Dalhousie University, Halifax.

he thought he had come up with the phrase first and that Trungpa Rinpoche had appropriated it from him.[17] In any case, this remark concretely reinforces a point Rinpoche made in his discussion of the American poets in his preface to *First Thought Best Thought*: that buddhadharma could not be proclaimed in America without the contribution of the American poets. In Ginsberg's interview with Portuges, he also commented that Trungpa Rinpoche asked him to take part in the poetry school at Naropa (Ginsberg is too humble here to say that he was one of its founders) because Rinpoche "wanted his meditators to be inspired to poetry, because they can't teach unless they're poets—they can't communicate."[18] As mentioned earlier, Chögyam Trungpa was not just interested in art for artists, or poetry for poets. As Ginsberg notes, Rinpoche was trying to affect the perception and communication "skills" of all of his students through the medium of art.

For further insight into Chögyam Trungpa's poetry itself, the reader is directed to the poems themselves, to the comments made by Allen Ginsberg in his Introduction to *First Thought Best Thought* (also reprinted as the Introduction to *Timely Rain*), and to David I. Rome's Editor's Preface to *First Thought Best Thought* and his Afterword to *Timely Rain*. In the Afterword, David attempts to look at Chögyam Trungpa's life and psychology through the lens of his poetry. David Rome, Rinpoche's private secretary and close student-friend for many years, has read, studied, and appreciated poetry for much of his life, with a particular fondness for the works of W. B. Yeats. He and Rinpoche shared an appreciation for poetry that was a creative spark for Rinpoche and an encouragement to persevere with his own poetic efforts. In his Preface to *First Thought Best Thought*, David talks about Rinpoche's spontaneous method of composing poetry, which took place on many late nights at the end of a full day of activities. For many years, David Rome was frequently the scribe who took down Rinpoche's poetry as he spoke it aloud. In his preface, perhaps out of modesty, David does not tell us that he was also the person who was called upon to read Trungpa Rinpoche's poetry in public gatherings of all kinds. David Rome's ability to evoke the words, the sounds, and the silence gave a voice to the poems—a voice that undoubtedly still echoes in the minds of many of Rinpoche's students who

17. Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Interviews*, p. 406.

18. Ibid., p. 399.

heard David Rome read on so many occasions. David is one of the finest editors of Rinpoche's work, as is reflected in the published poems. Rinpoche's poetry has never been among his bestsellers—poetry rarely is—but it is some of his most difficult work to edit.

David Rome was my mentor when I was first learning to edit Chögyam Trungpa's work. I assisted him with the editing of the 1977 Epilogue to *Born in Tibet* and worked with him for several years on other projects. At one point, I asked Trungpa Rinpoche if I could edit in my own style, based on what I was learning from David Rome, or whether I should learn to edit exactly as he did. Rinpoche was very definite: "You should learn to edit just like David." I doubt that Rinpoche believed I would be able to do this, since no two people would approach their work in exactly the same way. In fact, I think the point was that I would learn more from David if I paid very close attention, which indeed I did after this discussion. I have always been grateful for what I gleaned from my apprenticeship. For *The Collected Works* David Rome kindly sent me some comments on his editorial work with Chögyam Trungpa, particularly the editing of Rinpoche's poetry. David Rome writes:

> Rinpoche basically trusted me to edit appropriately and didn't intervene much. Being true to his meaning was always my highest priority and I would check my editing by reading back to him whenever possible.
>
> He wanted his voice to sound correct in English, and it was a challenge in editing the poetry sometimes to not change too much—to leave some of the oddness in because it was so much his voice and his mind, while rectifying other things like disagreement in tenses or persons or dropped articles, etc., where those only distracted from the sense. My habit at first with the poems was to make each phrase its own line—basically starting a new line whenever there was a pause in the dictation. Rinpoche often had lists in his poems—"jackal, peacock, limping ostrich, baboon with hiccups" (made-up example!)—and I would give each item its own line. At some point Rinpoche noticed this on the page and said, make the lines longer.
>
> One funny anecdote—but it's more about me than him—concerns the famous poem "Victory Chatter." There was a line that talked about "well-cared-for bows and wrestling armor." So it ap-

> peared in *First Thought Best Thought* and elsewhere for years. Neither I nor anyone else questioned the odd notion of "wrestling armor." Only much later did it dawn on me that he must have said "rustling" armor—not only did that make more sense, but it was clear from an earlier line in the poem "Rustling of armor takes place constantly." What other slips of the secretarial (or transcriborial) ear may lie on the page still undetected? Alas![19]

Although the introduction to Volume Seven has focused primarily on the classical Tibetan influences and the influence of contemporary American poets on the work of Chögyam Trungpa, there were many factors that affected his poetry. It would be remiss to leave the discussion of Chögyam Trungpa's poetry without mentioning once again the Japanese influence on his work. The beginning of the introduction to Volume Seven quotes Rinpoche's story about encountering a haiku in a magazine while he was still in India. There is little evidence of Japanese influence on the poetry he wrote in England, but there are many signs of it in his American poetry. His interest in Zen and Japanese aesthetics was undoubtedly reawakened by his meetings in the early 1970s with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, the founder of Zen Center San Francisco. Particularly in later years of his life, especially in 1983 and 1984, Rinpoche wrote many haiku-like three-line poems. During this era, he also instructed many of his students in how to recite spontaneous haiku and would mercilessly put them on the spot, asking them without warning to compose short poems—frequently about the four seasons. He usually would compose poetry in tandem with a student: first his spring haiku, then the student's, and so on.[20]

I remember a session in 1983 where he asked a student very learned in the Buddhist doctrine to recite poems about the seasons and insisted Buddhist terminology be eliminated from the compositions. Rinpoche

19. E-mail communication from David I. Rome to Carolyn Rose Gimian, January 29, 2002.

20. Over the years, students were not infrequently asked to contribute lines to Rinpoche's poems or to produce their own poem on a topic. For example, in the late 1970s in a late-night session in his office, following the abhisheka of Vajrayogini in which Rinpoche entered a number of his senior students into this tantric mandala, he and a group of students, including the Vajra Regent (Rinpoche's dharma heir), wrote dohas, poems expressing spontaneous insight. These have never been published. There are many other examples of this kind of group poetry effort.

rejected several efforts until a suitable "nonsectarian" haiku was forthcoming. Like everything in his life, poetry was not just a means of self-expression, but a way to work with others, to train them, and to wake them up. In the "Poets' Colloquium" Rinpoche says that the audience "might pick up some kind of spark. . . . So what I expect out of my work is that people will pay attention and they will think twice." Readers may find that advice applicable as they peruse his poems.

In *Timely Rain*, in addition to Chögyam Trungpa's poems, David Rome included other compositions, which he calls "Sacred Songs." These are related to Rinpoche's poetry, but they were composed in Tibetan as part of a number of tantric and Shambhala liturgies, including several received as terma texts. They are not included in *The Collected Works*. The Sound Cycles that Rinpoche used in his early Mudra Theatre work, which were included in the appendix to *Timely Rain*, are reproduced in Volume Seven; they are discussed below, in the section on theater. In the appendix, David Rome has also included several examples of elocution exercises that Rinpoche wrote in the 1980s.[21] They too appear in Volume Seven.

It seems that a brief discussion of elocution would be helpful to the readers of *The Collected Works*, given that it's a rather unknown part of Chögyam Trungpa's work and not a common discipline practiced in this day and age. The method of elocution that Trungpa Rinpoche developed was to have his North American students read aloud, with an Oxonian accent, exercises that he had written. He would usually read the exercise to demonstrate the correct pronunciation and then would ask the student to read slowly and carefully through the text. The irony of a Tibetan gentleman teaching Americans to pronounce English was not lost

21. I was one of Chögyam Trungpa's primary students of elocution, and during the last few years of his life and also since his death, I've taught a number of elocution classes based on the exercises and method that he developed. Allen Ginsberg, being a curious, open-minded, and unassuming person, attended a four-week elocution course that I taught at the 1984 Vajradhatu Seminary. He was interested in learning what new things Chögyam Trungpa was doing with the English language, and I'm sure that he had a much better appreciation for the deeper significance of Rinpoche's method of elocution than I did! It's my intention to write an article about Rinpoche's interest in English pronunciation at some point, since it is one of the less-well-known, more humorous, and quite intriguing aspects of his love affair with the English language. For further information on Trungpa Rinpoche's approach to elocution, see the excellent chapter in *Trungpa: Biographie* by Fabrice Midal (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002; English translation forthcoming from Shambhala Publications under the title *Chögyam Trungpa: His Life and Vision*).

on him. He generally enjoyed these sessions immensely. He would correct the student's pronunciation and ask them to repeat particular words or phrases many times, until he was satisfied with their elocution. Rinpoche's experiment with elocution began in 1983, but for some years before that, he had noted that he felt that many Americans had a particular speech neurosis, which manifested in swallowing and mumbling their words with a lack of attention to how they were speaking. Given Rinpoche's appreciation of contemporary American poetry and the way in which he embraced the freedom of expression in the West, it might seem contradictory that he adopted a method based on the upper-class received pronunciation of British English, certainly among the most formal approaches to speaking the English language. Rinpoche often referred to his approach to elocution as a form of "speech therapy." I think that what he found troubling about many Americans' speech was the lack of mind-body coordination and the lack of mindfulness and awareness in relating to communication. I don't think his use of Oxonian had anything to do with a class prejudice, nor was it based on lack of appreciation for American English. Rather, he was trying to address the casual aspect of American speech by contrasting it with a very formal approach that was sufficiently difficult for his American students to mimic that it caught their attention and held it while they were practicing elocution. Additionally, he was interested in conveying the onomatopoeia that he felt was inherent in language. The pronunciation of a word and its meaning should be indivisible, he felt. He sometimes said that when a word was properly pronounced it should feel very concrete, like holding a potato in your hand. In that sense, he was trying to bring his students to a poetic appreciation of language and to help them to have a more alive relationship with their own language. Here are some unpublished remarks that Chögyam Trungpa made at an evening gathering where elocution was the focus:

> Language is very special. It distinguishes between animals and human beings. Relating to language is also a Buddhist technique, such as the practice of mantra. Language is like the two wings of a bird. One wing is the vowels and the other is the consonants. The vowels and consonants are regarded as two feet walking together, two arms, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils: they have to go hand in hand. The Oxonian way of pronouncing words is a special way of

> accentuating human communication. It's much better than barking dogs! . . . The elocution exercises are not regarded as poetry. They are regarded as *exercises*. My final and last remark to the readers tonight is that you shouldn't torture yourself. As far as the readers are concerned, it will be very interesting to hear the ways that people from different parts of the United States speak and how they relate with language. In reading these exercises, one has to have delight in saying these words. Language is also onomatopoetic.[22]

One of Chögyam Trungpa's elocution exercises is entitled "Playing with the English Language." This was a man who was fascinated by the English language, who embraced it, chewed on it, used it, swallowed it, and offered it up for all of us to celebrate. He was indeed a great player of the language, almost in the way that a musician plays music. One hopes that the readers of *The Collected Works* will find much to enjoy and ponder in Chögyam Trungpa's poetry and his artful play with and on words.

FILM

Within a very short time after Rinpoche came to the United States, he became involved in an undertaking referred to as the Milarepa Film Project, whose purpose was to make a film about the life of Milarepa, Tibet's great poet-saint. In 1972, Rinpoche hosted a Milarepa Film Seminar in Boulder to explore this idea further. It's likely that Trungpa Rinpoche saw his first movies in India, although there is no record of this, and he undoubtedly attended the cinema in England. He was already interested in photography, as mentioned earlier in the introduction, and quite possibly his interest in making movies grew out of his efforts as a still photographer. He traveled to Los Angeles during his very early teaching tours in the United States in 1970 and '71, and there he met filmmakers Johanna Demetrakas and Baird Bryant, who worked on the Milarepa Film Project as well as on later films with which Rinpoche was involved. Johanna Demetrakas reports:

22. Edited from notes taken by Carolyn Rose Gimian December 17, 1983, at an evening of elocution and other readings at the Kalapa Court, the residence of Chögyam Trungpa.

> Before the Milarepa Film Seminar, Rinpoche had been in L.A. He asked Baird and me to do a little homework. He asked us to shoot (we worked in 16mm then) shots that manifested each of the five buddha families. I believe he suggested outdoor, nature shots. Baird and I lived in Malibu then, and I remember hiking up the cliffs and shooting through grasses and wildflowers, with the ocean in the background. He encouraged us to compose our shots with a foreground, middleground and background. Of course this gave each shot a lot of depth and dramatic energy. We did the assignment and headed for Boulder.[23]

Baird Bryant also commented on the work that he and Johanna did with the five buddha families:

> The Milarepa Film Seminar, which took place in Barry Corbett's living room in Boulder, was the beginning of many episodes regarding Dharma and Film Practice. . . . There were maybe 12 to 16 students here, most of whom had recently been introduced to the idea of the five buddha families, which remained the foundation of film thought, and the totality of Dharma Art to follow. Johanna and I, in preparation for the seminar, had gone out with my 16mm camera and shot scenes which, in our limited understanding at the time, represented the different families, or facets of the teachings on ego, etc. I thought that a shot of a tangled, dried thicket of twisted branches was a good representation of the ego tied in knots. I also shot the side of a hill wherein I saw a face drawn in the stone. When I told Rinpoche what I saw there, he said, a bit condescendingly, "That's very American." I remember thinking, so Tibetans see it differently, and how come? I know that, since that time, I have never been able to see a rotten log lying in the forest without thinking, there's the symbol of the Ratna Family. Likewise green buds bursting into fresh leaves say Karma Family in my head. The deep blue sky speaks of Buddha, graceful seductive curves in whatever medium represent Padma, and in contemplating the physical world I see it as the great Mudra of the spiritual universe: the complete Vajra Family, and in my world Trungpa Rinpoche is enthroned therein.[24]

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23. Fax on the Milarepa Film Project from Johanna Demetrakas to Carolyn Rose Gimian, August 2002.

24. E-mail communication from Baird Bryant to Carolyn Rose Gimian, December 2, 2002.

Already in 1971, Chögyam Trungpa had begun talking about the five buddha families and their application to art. Earlier volumes of *The Collected Works* show how Rinpoche introduced the five buddha families in the discussion of psychology and vajrayana Buddhism. Interestingly, their application to artistic creation seems to have been among his earliest introductions of this material. These principles, which describe styles of or approaches to perception, are based on Buddhist tantric teachings. The buddha families represent both qualities of innate wisdom and of confused perception that can be transformed into wisdom. In vajrayana Buddhism they are associated with descriptions of deities, the buddhas of the five families who represent wisdom and meditative states of mind.

A major feature of the Milarepa Film Seminar was Rinpoche's introduction of the five buddha families in relationship to filmmaking. In that context, he never said anything about where they came from in the Buddhist teachings. He introduced them in this way:

> We are trying to get at some basic understanding of seeing things in their absolute essence, their own innate nature. We can use this knowledge with regard to painting or poetry or arranging flowers or making films or composing music. It is also connected with the relationships between people. These five buddha principles seem to cover a whole area of new dimension of perception. They are very important at all levels and in all creative situations. We won't go through the philosophy; we'll start with the functional qualities of these five principles. It seems they are associated with a sense of composition. (pp. 645–646)

He explained his motivation for making this film as follows:

> Teaching is not meant to be verbal alone. It is very visual. Since we have the possibility of another dimension, using the great medium of motion pictures, I feel that this could be not only Milarepa's life teaching, but Tibetan Buddhism visualized in its raw and rugged form without the intrusion of psychedelic images and other extraneous material. (p. 638)

His intention was to convey the insights of Tibetan Buddhism and the power of meditative perception, letting the images speak for them-

selves. He wanted the film to "create a tension without using human beings visually," which he acknowledged "would be an incredible challenge." The images in the film would be limited "to animals or objects or nature or thangkas." However, Rinpoche made it clear that this would also "not be just a documentary with that 'educational film quality.'"

He also talked about specific scenes and shots. To convey the desolation that Milarepa felt in retreat when he longed for his teacher, Trungpa Rinpoche suggested that the movie might "work with desert, something completely open, and find one human footprint or maybe the footprint of an animal, a horse, and maybe horseshit. There could be a snowstorm and at the same time sand is blowing. The cameramen as well as the director should develop an absolute relationship with sand and storm, not just try to entertain" (p. 639). The study of the five buddha families was intended to shape how the film was shot, from five different perspectives representing the different energies of each family. Rinpoche talked about how tension and audience involvement would come from changing the buddha family perspectives throughout the film.

The material from the seminar was edited and published in an article in the *Chicago Review* in 1972, from which the quotes above are taken. The article was entitled "Visual Dharma: Film Workshop on the Tibetan Buddhist View of Aesthetics and Filmmaking," Other contributors to that issue of the *Review* included Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Robert Bly, and Charles Bukowski. An article excerpting some of the material also appeared in the *Filmmaker's Newsletter,* a small Los Angeles publication. So there was a wider audience curious about the ideas that Rinpoche was putting forth.[25]

In the fall of 1973, in connection with the film project, Rinpoche set out for Stockholm with Johanna Demetrakas, Baird Bryant, and several other students. In the Editor's Introduction to *Dharma Art,* Judith Lief reports that "he traveled to Sweden to visit the Museum Ethnographia, where a series of magnificent Milarepa thangkas had been stored for

25. For materials related to the Milarepa Film Project, see also the articles on the life of Milarepa in Volume Five. In the Introduction to that volume, the suggestion is made that one of these articles was an early treatment of some possible scenes for the Milarepa film.

years but seldom seen the light of day."[26] Baird Bryant describes the journey to Sweden:

> One morning I got the call, Rinpoche wanted me to go with him to Stockholm to film the collection of thangkas depicting the life of Milarepa. Allen Ginsberg had raised the money to finance the project through a series of poetry readings and fundraisers. Ruth Astor was making the arrangements.
>
> When I saw the price of the tickets, I started making enquiries and I found that, taking a charter flight, both Johanna and I could go for the same price. Ruth said OK, and we were both on our way. We flew to Amsterdam and took the train to Stockholm. We had to change trains in Copenhagen, which meant unloading all our film equipment, cases, tripod, etc. onto the platform. We were hungry, so Johanna took some money and left the station to find something to eat. While she was gone, a train pulled into the quais from which we were to leave. I decided to load all the gear onto the car so it would all be done and waiting in the car when Johanna returned. After ten minutes or so, the train pulled out of the station with only me on board. [Realizing I was alone and on the wrong train, I ran through the cars looking for a conductor or whomever. Finding no one, and seeing we were going into the switchyards there was nothing to do but wait until we stopped, at which time I ran to the engine and explained my plight. They saw the urgency, threw the switch onto a parallel track and rolled back into the station. It was time for the train to Stockholm to leave, and I was filled with panic: Johanna had little money, I had her passport, and, just as I loaded all the gear onto the right car, the train pulled out, headed for Stockholm. I didn't know if Jo was on the train or had waited in the station for me to show up. Then, here she came through the connecting door. We just collapsed from relief. When we were united with Rinpoche and I told him the story, he said to me, "You were testing your limits. Congratulations on passing the test."[27]

Johanna Demetrakas picks up the story here:

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26. In *Trungpa*, Fabrice Midal reports that Rinpoche's discovery of the existence of these thangkas was his inspiration altogether for the Milarepa Film Project.

27. Bryant, ibid.

The shoot took place at a natural history and anthropology museum in the middle of a park in the middle of Stockholm. The park was large, like Central Park. The Swedish Film Institute was on the other side of the park. We were also housed at the museum, which had rooms, showers, and a kitchen-dining room for visiting scholars. The Swedes were wonderfully hospitable, took good care of us, and left us alone in our work. It was very comfortable and secure in the museum, and elegant.

We worked from late morning, probably around ten, to late night, around nine or ten or sometimes later at night. . . . I was always starving when we finally broke from work to have our late dinner. I would attack the food ravenously, then become aware of Rinpoche's graceful and civilized *slow* eating. A little wake-up moment among the many during this intense experience. . . .

The work: A museum curator would bring the thangkas in. There were seventeen of them, rather large, maybe 3 or 4 feet tall by perhaps 2½ feet wide. We would unroll a thangka and carefully hang it on an easel kind of setup. Rinpoche would look it over and tell us the main figure. He'd describe the setting, the symbols, and the characters. He told us how the painters mixed their colors from minerals, which gave the paintings a dark and somewhat cold metallic quality. Also the use of gold leaf, how precious and meaningful when used, not for materialistic purposes. On one of the thangkas there was a delightful little man (not Milarepa) with his back to us and his pants down. . . . he was showing the effects of years of sitting meditation. Rinpoche also talked about the beautiful, stylistic clouds and how they looked like that in Tibet. Also about the formal approach to thangka painting, all the proportions predetermined, the egolessness of the painter.

Rinpoche and Baird worked an hour or two, sometimes more, on each thangka. I would look in the eyepiece often to see how his framing worked. Then we would roll the thangka back up.

I think this experience of learning about Milarepa through Rinpoche was the first glimpse I got of the true supernatural or mystical powers of teachers such as Milarepa and [Trungpa] Rinpoche. When he described Milarepa sitting in the freezing cold with nothing but that flimsy cotton shirt flapping around him in the wind, it was very real. Or when he discussed Milarepa's aunt's family, the betrayal and the hatred that poisoned Mila, it was deeply disturbing. And of course

his understanding of Milarepa's poetic voice was so intimate and subtle you felt like you were there, actually hearing Mila recite his songs. . . .

Of course, it was, as always, an intense experience to be with him for that week, working day and night. I think he must have been happy to be there with the thangkas, because he seemed to be relaxed and content all the time.[28]

Baird Bryant describes the work at the museum in Sweden, with emphasis on what it was like to work so intimately with Trungpa Rinpoche:

So there we were lodged in the guest rooms at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm with a special room put aside for us to work in. When we were getting set up with the lights, a place to hang the thangkas and so forth, the director of the museum came to see. Somehow he had the notion, perhaps from Ruth, that we were going to shoot with animation cameras. He wanted to see how we were going to animate the thangkas . . . i.e., make them move. He seemed quite disappointed when we informed him that we were using regular film cameras, and making the thangkas move was out of the question . . .

[At the Milarepa Film Seminar] my main concern was how could the magic of Milarepa be shown in film, aside from a kind of Superman cartoon where Mila would fly to the top of the mountain, leaving the Bön magician, riding his shaman's drum, far behind. Or how would you show Milarepa walking through solid stone? Well, when Rinpoche, Johanna, Bill Hunter, and I arrived . . . at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm and started unrolling the thangkas depicting the life of Milarepa, it became patently clear how it could be done. Unrolling the first thangka was like opening a portal into another world. It was magnificent, some 2 by 4 feet, in perfect shining condition, glittering with gold . . . completely magical. As we looked at more of them, each had a large central figure of Mila, one of them green from eating nettles, getting older with each one, surrounded by little figures telling the story of his adventures: conjuring a giant scorpion to pull down the house of the evil uncle, killing the partygoers inside. Building nine houses and tearing down eight, and so on

28. Demetrakas, ibid.

> and on. It was all there. The entire life of the great poet-saint of the Kagyü lineage. . . .
>
> On the first setup, I realized that my big 25 to 250 zoom was not holding focus, it had not traveled well, and the tripod was not the best for the fine work. Johanna and I and Bill Hunter walked across the commons to the Swedish Film Institute to see about another tripod and to see if there was a technician who could columnate the lens. Bill's wooden leg had not been kind to him during the walk, so his movements were curtailed from then on. We could not and never did solve the lens problem. I decided we had to go forward or lose the whole shoot. Before I went to work, I explored the ways of compensating and working with the lens the way it was. Before the first shot, Rinpoche, under his breath, recited a mantra to enlist the aid of the deities.
>
> Rinpoche would study the thangka, then direct the shots one after another. "Start wide here, then zoom and pan slowly onto this figure. Pan across this line of characters showing that each one of the twelve is the same." "Who are they?" I asked. "They are all Milarepa," he replied. "He divided himself into twelve." Naively, I said, "Could you show me how to do that? . . . I would do that!" Rinpoche looked at me askance but said nothing. And so it went for the six days we were there. . . .
>
> As protection, after the film shoot, we used the 4- by 5-inch view camera that the museum had and shot a complete set of Ektachromes. The idea being that back in Boulder, if more shots were needed, they could be done from the high-quality 4 by 5's . . . a treasure in themselves still to be found in the Vajradhatu Archives.[29]

Tragically, because of the problem with the lens described above, when the filmmakers returned to the United States and developed the film, they found that "the lens caused the film to go a little out of focus, some of the time,"[30] but not all the time. However, "for eventual big-screen 16mm projection, this could not be fixed."[31] The project was put on permanent hold, as Baird Bryant reports:

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29. Baird Bryant, ibid. The Archives, as mentioned, does have close to a hundred slides of details of these beautiful Milarepa thangkas, photographed during the trip to Sweden.

30. Demetrakas, ibid.

31. Ibid.

> At Naropa, during the first summer session where I was teaching Film Expression, I made inquiries about the Milarepa film and got different answers: It was at Barry Corbett's house, it was under Ken Green's bed, etc. Then I asked Rinpoche. He said, "I'm sorry to say, the Milarepa film is in the Bardo." So, there it was, somehow lost.[32]

After Rinpoche's death, the footage made its way into the Shambhala Archives. In the last few years, there has been some interest, but as yet no action, to review the footage to see what can be done with the latest technologies available. Johanna Demetrakas notes that, in preparing her comments on the Milarepa Film Project for this introduction, "Baird and I talked about the possibility of fixing or working with the Milarepa footage. . . . With video, and the finishing tools available today, we could probably produce a good copy."[33]

It would be impossible now to complete the Milarepa film exactly as Trungpa Rinpoche envisioned it, since he wanted to use the footage of the thangkas in conjunction with landscapes and "nature shots" filmed in different styles to reflect different themes in Milarepa's life and different buddha families. This part of the project was never completed. There might, however, be enough information in the talks from the Milarepa Film Seminar for a filmmaker to make a film based on Rinpoche's intentions. This would be extremely interesting, since there was no other artistic endeavor that Rinpoche proposed quite like the Milarepa film. The closest one can come, perhaps, is Chögyam Trungpa's own photographs, which often seem to play with different perspectives and foci that may well be based on the buddha families. It's only now, so many years after his death, that the Shambhala Archives is starting to reproduce some fine prints of Rinpoche's photographs, in conjunction with Michael Wood, a photographer-student of Rinpoche's who helped to start the Miksang school of photography based on many of the principles of dharma art.[34]

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32. Baird Bryant, ibid.

33. Demetrakas, ibid.

34. Along with Michael Wood, John McQuade was the founder of the current Miksang Society. Miksang was the inspiration of the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin, Chögyam Trungpa's dharma heir. His interest in photography led him to start the first Miksang group for exploring the possibilities of a contemplative approach. Later he encouraged and supervised the development of the current Miksang Society. In 1985, he approved the Miksang course of training and officially established the Miksang Society as a vehicle for exploring and presenting contemplative photography. Ösel Tendzin's calligraphy "Miksang" serves as the masthead of the group's stationery.

The Collected Works includes material based on talks given by Chögyam Trungpa at the Milarepa Film Seminar in several forms. Two chapters of *Dharma Art,* "Five Styles of Creative Expression" and "Endless Richness," are based on the seminar. To underscore the more universal appeal of the material, the specific connection to the film project has been edited out. However, because the original talks are of such interest for anyone involved in making films, and because they contain such detailed information on different aspects of filmmaking, the *Chicago Review* article mentioned above is also included in Volume Seven, with Rinpoche's diagram of the five buddha families reproduced from the *Filmmaker's Newsletter.*

Chögyam Trungpa was involved with several other film projects. In 1974 a film called *Empowerment* was made to celebrate the first visit to America of His Holiness the sixteenth Karmapa. A second film on the Karmapa, *The Lion's Roar,* was made following His Holiness's death in 1981 and incorporated much of the footage from *Empowerment.* Rinpoche worked on both of these films, more as an adviser than in the screenwriter or director role. A film about Trungpa Rinpoche's work as an artist, *Discovering Elegance,* was made in connection with one of the art installations he created in California at the LAICA Gallery in Los Angeles. He was very involved in how that film was shot, and he had specific ideas about the editing of the footage. His ideas were not all adopted, but one of the film's producers and cameramen, James Hoagland, kept the notes on Rinpoche's ideas for the editing and has talked about reediting the film based on his intentions. Baird Bryant worked on many of these film shoots and has supplied some comments on the work that he did with Chögyam Trungpa:

> Along the way, however, between the Milarepa Seminar and the shoot in Sweden, there are some events which are notable. . . . It was at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center that at one point we went out with the camera to make some shots. Rinpoche said, "Zoom on the top of that ridge and pan along with the telephoto." He watched me make the shot, not very smoothly, and then said, "You're getting a picture of your nerves."
>
> "How did you know?" I replied. These are the kind of things that will stay with me forever.
>
> Then came the visit of His Holiness, the sixteenth Karmapa, and

shooting for *The Lion's Roar*.[35] First, the Black Hat ceremony on the pier in San Francisco. Shopping, playing Pong at the amusement pier, going to the zoo where the animals all became very excited by the vibes of this Dharma King. I remember the shift in my consciousness about Rinpoche. Until that time he was always somehow fundamentally, it seemed, a Lama who had taken off his robes and dressed in western clothes . . . a powerful being, yes with all kinds of esoteric knowledge, but still, one of the boys who liked to drink, smoke cigarettes, and get it on with the ladies . . . my kind of guru.

But then, when His Holiness arrived, suddenly there he was in all his glory, in magnificent brocades, probably the uniform of a Tibetan general, with the whole weight of the lineage stacked on his head like a hundred Buddhas and Boddhisattvas one on top of the other. The glory of it left you no choice but to bow as deeply as you could before such splendor.

[Later] the shooting of *Discovering Elegance* was like old times back in the museum. We understood each other perfectly. "Draw back wider and wider, then hit!!" I would be zooming back on the entire arrangement (they were all fabulous), then going in as quickly as possible on one flower at the edge of the arrangement. Each one called for a different shot, and one after the other, we covered all the rooms: the anteroom, the study with those exotic fold-out books, the kitchen (if you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen, John Steinbeck III remarked on seeing the charred limbs of one display), and finally, the Drum room with its massive Tibetan drum as the centerpiece.[36]

Altogether, Chögyam Trungpa's involvement with film seems to have been an amazingly fertile time. The stories from this period enable

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35. Probably Baird Bryant is referring to making of the film *Empowerment* during His Holiness Karmapa's first visit to North America in 1974. Much of the footage from this film eventually was used in *The Lion's Roar.*

36. Baird Bryant, ibid. Baird ends his memoir: "All I can do is point to the greatest tribute that has ever been paid me. In *The Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala,* Rinpoche writes, '. . . I have a friend and student named Baird Bryant whom I've worked with for many years. He is a filmmaker, and we worked together on several films. I can see that he has that kind of sadness. He wishes that something could be done for others, that something could be made right. He has that sadness, aloneness and loneliness, which I appreciate very much. In fact, I have learned from witnessing my friend's experience, my best friend.' Thank you for all your precious gifts, my best friend, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche."

us to see just how intimate and vibrant his involvement was with American avant-garde art and artists in the early 1970s. This creative interaction continued in other aspects of his artistic work as well.

Theater

In America, Chögyam Trungpa developed an intense interest in theater, and in the 1970s and early '80s he wrote seven plays.[37] In 1968, Rinpoche had met the American playwright Jean-Claude van Itallie at Samye Ling, Rinpoche's meditation center in Scotland. For *The Collected Works*, Jean-Claude provided me with excerpts from his memoirs concerning his first meeting with Rinpoche in England, as well as with detailed comments on the genesis of his relationship with Trungpa Rinpoche and the theater work they did together. The record of the first meeting in Scotland and what led up to it, largely excerpted from Jean-Claude's memoirs, is a window into Chögyam Trungpa's first encounter with theater work in the West. Jean-Claude writes:

> In Eskdalemuir [in 1968] I was visiting Tania Leontov, aka Kesang Tonma, my old high school friend. She'd accompanied me to London in 1967 when my play *America Hurrah* opened at the Royal Court.
>
> At that time, because of my interest in Buddhism, Joe [Chaikin, director and founder of the Open Theater] introduces Tania and me to the pair of Vietnamese monks who worked on Peter Brook's *US*. Later, when Tania stays on in London after I leave, the Vietnamese monks alert her to the opening of a new Tibetan Buddhist Center, Samye Ling, in Scotland, founded by a young Oxford-educated lama named Trungpa Rinpoche. Tania goes to Scotland and becomes Trungpa's secretary.
>
> 1968, June 1–7 (approx.)—Eskdalemuir, Scotland:
>
> At Samye Ling I'm standing in the kitchen with Tania when a short Tibetan in burgundy monk's robes appears. He seems to mate-

37. *Kingdom of Philosophy, The Heart Sutra, Prajna, Water Festival, Sandcastles, Child of Illusion,* and *Proclamation. The Heart Sutra* appears to be an earlier version of *Prajna*. It was apparently composed as an exercise for a theater and play-writing workshop Rinpoche conducted in 1973 or early 1974. *Kingdom of Philosophy* was written during a retreat at Charlemont, Massachusetts, in 1972. I have been unable to obtain information on the dates or circumstances of the composition of the other plays.

rialize next to the refrigerator. Tania says to me, "This is Trungpa Rinpoche." He looks young and has soft brown eyes. I don't fully understand until Tania tells me again later that this monk is the founder of the center.

A couple of days later I'm granted a formal audience with Rinpoche. I wait nervously by the house in a barren field with sheep grazing. Tania comes out to get me, giving me Rinpoche's mail to hand to him. Rinpoche sits cross-legged on a cushion. With some stiffness I sit in the same way facing him.

Rinpoche is gracious and gentle. He asks me questions about the theater. I describe Grotowski's work. I ask Rinpoche if, as I believe, there's a connection between our preoccupations in off-off-Broadway theater and Eastern spirituality. I tell him, "From the work we're doing, I'm learning the importance of being a participant in—rather than a spectator of—my life."

Rinpoche suggests, "Why not see yourself as an emperor in the center of the world allowing everything to happen around you without getting too involved?"

During our conversation, Rinpoche asks several times, "Where are you going?" Each time he asks, "Where are you going?" I recite part of my itinerary: "I'm taking the train to London on Wednesday, then I'm flying to Boston. . . ."

At the end of the interview Rinpoche asks again: "Where are you going?" My crossed legs have fallen asleep. I can hardly get up. We both laugh.

Later I use this interview as the basis of the Call Girl's interview with a guru in *King of the United States.*[38]

In the early 1970s in America, Chögyam Trungpa started a theater group called Mudra Theater, which performed a number of his plays and worked with exercises that Rinpoche developed, based on the principles of what came to be called "Mudra Space Awareness." Most of this work took place in Boulder. During the 1970s, Rinpoche gave several dozen talks on theater work and Mudra Space Awareness, which were transcribed and edited for the use of members of the Mudra Theater group but have never been published, except for a fragment from one talk that

38. From a work in progress, *War, Sex and Dreams: A Playwright's Memoir* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. Used by permission.

appeared in the *Vajradhatu Sun* magazine, reproduced in this volume. The exercises he developed seem to have been related, at least in part, to insights that Trungpa Rinpoche gained from his practice and study of both mahamudra and the dzogchen teachings, or maha ati, as well as his training in monastic dance in Tibet. He once described Mudra Space Awareness thus: "Having been born, so to speak, now we can try to stand, and then we'll begin to walk, and then we'll introduce the monastic dance which I studied in Tibet."[39]

The earliest exercises that Rinpoche developed worked with the interplay between sound and silence. They were called "Sound Cycles," and David Rome included a number of them in the appendix to the poetry collection *Timely Rain*. Rinpoche described them as "a means of relating to the space in which your vocal projection takes place."[40] David Rome reported to me that "there were other [early] exercises as well that are now unfortunately lost, especially some fascinating ones applying the five sense perceptions—but not literally—to working with objects."[41]

In 1973, a theater conference took place in Boulder. The conference was organized and attended by Rinpoche's students, with much of the primary work being done by Jean-Claude van Itallie, who found funding for the conference and arranged for many prominent avant-garde theater people to attend. Because of Jean-Claude's efforts, Robert Wilson and many actors from his theater company, the Byrd Hoffmann School of Byrds, attended the conference, as well as actors, playwrights, and directors from the Open Theater, the Manhattan Project, the Magic Theater, the Iowa Theater Lab, and the Provisional Open Theater.

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39. Midal, *Trungpa*, p.185.

40. Ibid., p. 181. According to Fabrice Midal in *Trungpa*, his book on the life and teachings of Chögyam Trungpa—which contains an excellent chapter on Mudra Theater—the Sound Cycles were written in response to a request from Joseph Chaikin, the founder and director of the Open Theatre, who asked Rinpoche to write something that reflected his theories of theater work. However, according to Jean-Claude van Itallie, who figured prominently in the development of the Mudra work, Joseph Chaikin, when recently asked, told van Itallie that he never asked Rinpoche to write anything. Jean-Claude van Itallie wrote to me, "I think it quite possible, however, that Rinpoche was stimulated toward theatrical explorations by theater discussions he had with me and other theater people." E-mail communication from Jean-Claude van Itallie to Carolyn Rose Gimian, November 2002.

41. E-mail communication from David I. Rome to Carolyn Rose Gimian, October 2002.

The idea for the conference arose in a conversation over dinner between Trungpa Rinpoche, Jean-Claude van Itallie, and some other students. Jean-Claude writes:

> I'm having dinner in a restaurant with Rinpoche, Tania [Leontov], and others near Barnet, Vermont, when the idea comes up to have a theater-and-meditators conference in Boulder. The idea emerges from the conversations that Rinpoche and I often have about the kind of theater I'm involved with and its relationship to meditation. Rinpoche is enthusiastic about the idea. I'm a vegetarian at the time, but Rinpoche puts steak on my plate from his plate, saying, "Eat this. You'll need the strength to put the conference together." Of course, because he asked me to, I eat the piece of steak. And I put together the conference.
>
> At the time I'm on the Board of Theater Communications Group and I'm on the Theater Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. Both these groups give me money to put together the conference, which costs a total of something a little over $10,000. It's to their credit that they funded something which was purely for the benefit of the participants—not to include a public performance. It was to be an "Eastern meditation meets Western avant-garde theater" conference. I apply to the International Theater Institute too, and while they have no money to give me, they give me help including an assistant, Maurice McClellan, who works at ITI. I invite the most exciting people I know in the theater. The avant-garde theater community is not huge at the time. We all know each other. Of those who say they'll come, there's Robert Wilson and members of his company. I'd given Bob his first job in the theater—designing the dolls for *Motel* in *America Hurrah*. Andre Gregory (whom you might have seen in *My Dinner with Andre*) came. He'd been a couple of years ahead of me at Harvard. Lee Worley came. She was at the time living in Santa Fe but I had met her in 1963 at the beginning of the Open Theater where she was an actress. That was Lee's first contact with Rinpoche. Other friends came—the actor Nancy Cooperstein, the playwright Maria Irene Fornes, the critic Gordon Rogoff, the director John Lion, the photographer and designer Kozuko Oshima. . . . Some people did not come. The Polish director Jerzy Grotowski, for whom I had translated from the French on his first trips to NYC, refused saying, "One guru at a conference is enough." The British director

Peter Brook could not make it. The American director Joseph Chaikin didn't care to come, saying, "I don't like organized religion."

It's my first visit to Boulder. I stay at the Boulderado Hotel with a view of the mountains. Rinpoche has named this conference *The Mudra Workshop*. We rented a fraternity house on Broadway near Baseline for the proceedings. Some of us gave workshops. I gave a playwriting workshop. The theater artists perform for the meditators who are gratifyingly shocked by the lack of conventional theater form. Robert Wilson stages a special performance. I write something quickly which both theater artists and meditators perform. There are panels and classes. I give one in playwriting which Irene Fornes takes. Rinpoche gives several talks and appears in a theater happening on the last day as a fortuneteller at the center of a maze created with newspaper walls. . . .

Rinpoche at the conference told people who asked him what buddha families they belonged to. He told me I'm ratna-vajra like himself. Rinpoche encouraged his students to classify different things including theater pieces and paintings as combinations of buddha, ratna, vajra, karma, or padma families. It's a game I enjoyed. It honed our perceptions of the universal energies in the world and culture around us. Rinpoche was interested in many artistic fields of endeavor including performance, painting, poetry, and playwriting and he enjoyed practicing them all to one degree or another. The buddha families are a language in which to speak about specific energetic qualities common to all art, indeed to all phenomena.

Toward the end of the conference we put on an impromptu performance for each other. I wrote a little play which people read aloud. It included a parody of some of the people at the conference. I remember one line and the person who read it again and again: "I sing my own melody."[42]

One of the participants mentioned by van Itallie, Lee Worley, has also provided some comments on the 1973 theater conference. Lee, who has been the head of the theater department at Naropa University (formerly Naropa Institute) for many years, describes her experiences at the conference:

42. From an e-mail from Jean-Claude van Itallie to Carolyn Rose Gimian, 2003. Used by permission.

In January of 1973 Jean Claude van Itallie invited me to Boulder, Colorado, to attend a theater conference. . . . I was living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, having moved out of New York City with my baby daughter and her father the previous year. Three young men from my new acting workshop in Santa Fe wanted to come with me, and since Boulder was close by, the conference agreed to pay our way.

In addition to members of New York's Open Theater, I remember that the conference drew people from the Firehouse Theater of Minneapolis, the Magic Theater of San Francisco, Robert Wilson's company, and the Iowa Theater Lab. Conference participants were housed in the same large fraternity house where the meetings and workshops were held. It was a cold February and there was no way to get away from each other. In typical theater fashion, everyone was behaving in very self-important ways. Each day different companies gave workshop demonstrations, and each evening there were performances. To keep my novice actors from freaking out in the company of professional artists, we met daily and worked on creating a skit based on a short story by Trungpa, "Report from Outside the Closet,"[43] which had been included in the conference's information packets.

I enjoyed being caught up in the whirl of the conference, away from home and baby for the first time, admiring everyone's work and worrying about my own presentation, fascinated by the Tibetan gentleman with the limp who seemed to show up everywhere, disrupting events, creating chaos, causing everyone's ego to inflate larger and larger, and yet not doing much of anything. At the same time as everyone seemed to be growing more and more crazy, it felt like quite a safe situation with someone at the helm deliberately allowing us to spin out of control within a loving, protective container. . . .

My company only felt comfortable with the people from the Mudra Theater Group, our hosts for the conference. They were Trungpa's students who had been training with him in performance exercises. We visiting actors and directors eagerly awaited their presentation scheduled for the end of the week, but they seemed unenthusiastic, embarrassed, and apologetic. In fact, they didn't seem to know exactly what they were going to do, or even why they had

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43. This story is included in Volume Three of *The Collected Works.*

hosted the conference. One or another of them would mutter to me about the excruciatingly painful exercises that Rinpoche had them do. I got the feeling that it was devotion alone that kept them in the Mudra work.

The Mudra Group presented work on "sound cycles." . . . These little poem-like things use Sanskrit and English words as well as breaking up words into individual syllables.[44] The emphasis is not on the content of the pieces but on using the whole body as the vocal chamber and on clear diction of the vowels and consonants, thereby letting the sound convey its own content.

Rinpoche was seated in front of the conference attendees. At his feet sat a disheveled young man with curly blond hair. During the course of the Mudra presentation on sound cycles he seemed to be crawling all over Rinpoche, singing off key, "Terrible person, I'm a terrible person." Or perhaps it was "Terrible person, he's a terrible person." I was offended. He was either drunk, high, or crazy. I thought him inappropriate and disruptive. Why doesn't someone remove him, I huffed. Rinpoche didn't seem to mind.

During the question period someone asked what Rinpoche meant by the word *neurosis*. He replied that without neurosis there is nothing to work with. All art has both neurosis and its absence. This gives a lot of material and the possibility for relating to space. "It would be an extremely good and friendly gesture if tonight we would all agree that anybody involved with an acting situation or the public entertainment world is neurotic. Let us really believe in that. We are all somewhat fucked-up people. It's an embarrassing thing to say, but it doesn't seem to be my particular embarrassment." I could feel tension heating up the room.

The drunken character continued to sing "terrible person."

That afternoon the Iowa Theater Lab had demonstrated their work. I didn't attend, but my actors reported that when the director cracked a whip and dictated commands, the actors meekly obeyed. As the evening's discussion continued, this director started engaging Rinpoche in an argumentative dialogue. His point was that he thought of actors as the most sane people. "Some of us are greedy for life. Some of us grip it, some of us are deeply involved in grasping

44. According to Midal in *Trungpa*, Rinpoche asked David Rome and Ruth Astor to present the sound cycles at the conference.

at life. We love life." He became increasingly agitated. "If our aim in life is to grab, then we shouldn't disappoint ourselves," he said.

Rinpoche responded, "If you grasp, you don't get anything."

"And what if we define ourselves as neurotic?"

"You get yourself, which is already neurotic." (*Laughter*)

The director was infuriated; Rinpoche remained quite cool. The whole situation became almost unbearably electric. Rinpoche said, "You see, I'm just presenting a satirical approach to the game. I'm not presenting ideal sanity at all. Nobody can do that. There has been Christ and Buddha and Muhammad and all kinds of saviors who offered themselves up to us as targets to be attacked. And still the work goes on. Nobody really provided any alternatives at all. That seems to be the most exciting and beautiful theater of all. Christ didn't make it. Buddha didn't make it. Muhammad didn't make it! This is monumental failure! It's fantastic! The theater of life and death! As you see, we're not particularly religious people and you might want to avoid people who meditate because we're not particularly religious."

Rinpoche stood up abruptly and shouted, "We just meditate, just for the hell of it!" Then he saluted smartly and stormed out of the hall. He did not seem to limp as he marched away.

Aside from "terrible person," the room was silent.

Next morning when we got up, we discovered that the Iowa Theater Lab had struck camp and disappeared.

At this Mudra conference, I discovered the theater I wished to create and the way I wanted to train actors. It was as though a question I didn't even know I was asking was answered. The question? Can there be a more human basis for developing performance than that which resides in talent, personality, and ego territory?[45]

As Jean-Claude van Itallie noted in his remarks above, Robert Wilson and his company, the Byrd Hoffmann School of Byrds, presented some of their work in a performance at the conference. The piece they presented involved very slow, dignified movements. Andy Karr, a longtime student of Rinpoche's and an early participant in the theater work, told me that Robert Wilson's piece was "brilliant, nonconceptual theater. Fif-

45. "Memories of the Mudra Theater Conferrence," Lee Worley, November 2002. Lee notes that her quotations are from a transcript of the Mudra Theater Conference talk given by Chögyam Trungpa on February 19, 1973.

teen years later, we would have had nothing but admiration for this nonconceptual performance art. But at the time, we couldn't handle the space. You have to remember that Rinpoche's students were almost all very young. The average age was around twenty-three. So we were like children, in some sense."[46] The Byrd Hoffmann troupe had placed a large bowl of apples and oranges in the middle of the audience, to be consumed as refreshments during the performance. Rinpoche's students took the idea of "audience participation" one step too far and began rolling pieces of fruit around on the stage and otherwise interrupting the normal course of the performance in a way that was disrespectful of the space that Wilson and his troupe were trying to create. As Andy Karr told me, "After the first piece of fruit rolled out onto the stage, all hell broke loose." According to Midal's description in *Trungpa* and confirmed by both David Rome and Andy Karr, Rinpoche was quite unhappy with his students' boorish behavior. Since there was nothing to be done, however, he himself took an orange, peeled it, and ate it.

Many of the theater people who attended the conference were infuriated by the disrespectful behavior of the Buddhist students, although David Rome reports that Robert Wilson himself "took the whole thing in stride." There was a confrontational meeting the day after the performance, and some of the visiting theater people threatened to leave. (Based on remarks from Lee Worley and David Rome, it's quite possible that this had more to do with the Iowa Theater Lab people than anything involving Robert Wilson and his group.) On behalf of his students, Rinpoche remained unapologetic. He gave a very powerful talk on the problems of egotism among artists. Andy Karr reported that, in this talk, Rinpoche connected very strongly with many of the people there. Jean-Claude van Itallie says of Robert Wilson's piece and the "furor" that unfolded around it:

> I think Andy Karr's and David Rome's descriptions of the Bob Wilson performance are fairly accurate. It took Bob several days to prepare his piece. He was, as always, very serious about it, working behind closed doors. Watching the piece after being kept waiting for several hours, the meditators were shocked. Some giggled. A few booed

46. All quotations of Andy Karr from a conversation with Carolyn Rose Gimian, October 2002.

rudely. They didn't know what to make of what they were seeing. The piece was slow, visually beautiful, and devoid of story. Rinpoche was respectful toward the work. If he was angry at his students, he didn't reprimand them in front of the theater people. Indeed, as David Rome and Andy Karr point out, he instead delivered a lecture to the theater people about ego. I felt that everyone, including Rinpoche, enjoyed shocking the others by what he or she said, wrote, or performed. This was theatrical in the best sense—we shocked each other's preconceptions of the world.[47]

Toward the end of the conference, in addition to presenting the sound cycles, Rinpoche's students built a huge newspaper installation that was divided into a number of rooms. Participants made their way through this maze, and in each of five rooms they encountered a person who represented one of the buddha families and who would, if supplicated properly, answer questions. Rinpoche himself was in one of these rooms. David Rome told me that "he was somewhere in the middle of the maze, maybe toward the end, just sitting in a simple chair in the middle of a newspaper room, saying nothing."[48]

Jean-Claude van Itallie commented:

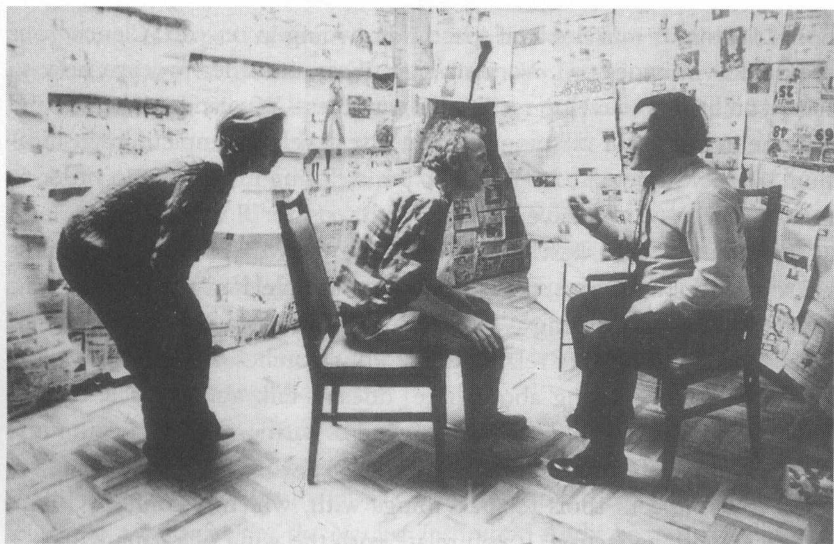
> I remember the newspaper maze pretty much as you describe . . . Rinpoche sitting in an armchair toward the end of the newspaper room. . . . Sitting in his chair, he said nothing if you asked him nothing. People didn't expect to see him there—he was a surprise. He said, "I'm curious if people will speak to me." He was ready to answer anything anyone asked. He was being a fortuneteller, but you had to ask him a question to find that out. If anyone asked him anything, they were the exception. Most people passed through the newspaper room respectfully and asked Rinpoche nothing.[49]

The day after the conference ended, Rinpoche introduced the first series of Mudra Space Awareness exercises, which became the foundation for the theater work done by his students for many years. The exer-

47. E-mail from Jean-Claude van Itallie to Carolyn Rose Gimian, November 2002.

48. E-mail from David I. Rome to Carolyn Rose Gimian, October 2002.

49. E-mail from Jean-Claude van Itallie to Carolyn Rose Gimian, November 2002.



Chögyam Trungpa and students encounter one another in a newspaper maze in 1973. Mudra Theater Conference in Boulder, Colorado.

PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.

cises involve assuming various postures and then intensifying the space around oneself. Very slow, deliberate movements and intensified breathing may also be part of an exercise. Rinpoche described his motivation for introducing these theater exercises as follows: "The problem in acting is not being able to relate with the space which surrounds the body. In other words, the problem is in the relationship between the projector (which is the actor in this case) and the projections (which is the audience). Unless we are able to develop a sense of sympathy with ourselves and a sense of sympathy with space, there is a tendency to become hostile and feel a need to impress the audience."[50] He also described the approach to intensification as follows: "In order to learn to relate with space we have to learn to intensify the body and build intensive situations as much as possible. Can you just try to feel the space around your

50. As quoted in Midal, *Trungpa*. From unpublished Mudra Theater transcripts in the Shambhala Archives.

body? Pull your muscles as if space is crowding in on you. Clench your teeth and your toes. . . . Very strange to say, in order to learn how to relax you have to develop really solid tenseness. You can breathe out and breathe in but don't rest your breath, just develop complete intensification. Then you begin to feel that space is closing in on you. In order to relate with space you have to relate with tension."[51]

In some of his earliest talks introducing the Mudra Space Awareness exercises, Rinpoche also spoke about how they related to particular vajrayana or tantric teachings: "A lot of the exercises are sort of maha ati yoga practices. They are related to the Four Torches. Actually, the maha ati [practice I'm talking about here] doesn't talk about space; it talks about wind or air. The first one, the wind of karma, is related with muscles, and intensification of limbs. So, in other words, your limbs are related to as kind of tools to grab things with, which is connected with karma's volitional action. If you relate with the wind of karma, which is that creation of space within your muscles, you relate with the space or the air which is contained within the muscles. The second one is related with creating space through the eyes and has to do with the wind of emotions or kleshas. The third one is the wind of body. It is connected to the earth and the four elements. The last one is called inner luminosity. It is connected with brain and heart together, which is something very subtle."[52]

Altogether, there is a great deal of subtlety and profundity in the theater work that Chögyam Trungpa introduced. Little has been written about this work, and for this reason, this introduction to Volume Seven has gone into considerable detail to provide information about the events that form the background to the few theater-related publications that are included in *The Collected Works*. Chögyam Trungpa's work in this area put him in touch with the leading figures in the American avant-garde theater and show yet another way in which he brought together teachings from the vajrayana tradition of Buddhism in Tibet with the most modern developments in an artistic field. One hopes that in the near future more information on this fascinating aspect of his work will be published.

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51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., p. 186, quoting from a presentation of Intensification Exercises, February 24, 1973, unedited transcript.

In 2001, Naropa University published a book on Lee Worley's theater work, *Coming from Nothing*, which includes an introduction to some of the principles of Mudra Space Awareness. Lee is planning to edit a book of Chögyam Trungpa's plays and some of his talks on space awareness, accompanied by interviews or reflections by theater people who have been influenced by Rinpoche's work. Joanna Rotte, a playwright and director who teaches at the Villanova University, is also interested in working on the book. Joanna never met Trungpa Rinpoche, but in the last ten years she has become familiar with his plays, and in the summer of 2000, she adapted one of Rinpoche's best-known dramas, *Prajna*, for the Philadelphia Fringe Festival.

Volume Seven of *The Collected Works* includes the original version of *Prajna*, which was performed for the first time during the summer session at the Naropa Institute in 1974. Subsequently, the play was published in *Loka: A Magazine of the Naropa Institute.*[53] Andy Karr, who directed *Prajna* when it was performed at Naropa, wrote an introduction in *Loka* to the play. He explains that it "is based on the *Heart Sutra*, a distillation of the voluminous *Prajnaparamita* (Perfection of Wisdom) literature, which is central to Mahayana Buddhism."

The other play included in Volume Seven is *Proclamation*, which was performed by the Mudra Theater Group at a Midsummer's Day festival in 1980. This play combines elements from both the Buddhist and the Shambhala teachings. Interestingly, both *Prajna* and *Proclamation*—one of the last plays that Rinpoche wrote—include recitations of the *Heart Sutra*, an intriguing hint that his theater work may have had an ongoing connection to exploring the interaction between form and emptiness, which is so central to the Prajnaparamita teachings of the mahayana.

53. Naropa provided a ground for Rinpoche to explore many of his interests in the arts. From its inception, the Institute brought together a remarkable group of artists working in many different disciplines. It was a fertile environment that nurtured artistic creativity. Throughout the early summer sessions, there were many performances of dance, music, and theater, and many exhibits of visual art. In addition to being a situation where Trungpa Rinpoche's work could be exhibited and performed, Naropa also provided a venue for Rinpoche to present his ideas on dharma art. In 1975, as mentioned above, he presented the long seminar "Tibetan Buddhist Iconography," which was not about symbolism in Tibetan art per se, but rather an exploration of much more primordial issues of symbolism and perception—very much in the spirit of exploring the five buddha families that he presented in the Milarepa Film Seminar. Many of the chapters in *Dharma Art* are based on the iconography seminar at Naropa. Later, when Rinpoche began to present dharma art seminars, Naropa became a main venue for those events as well.

It would seem that Rinpoche was not primarily interested in exploring characters or their stories in his plays, but much more interested in exploring the space in which dramas arise.

Volume Seven, as mentioned earlier, also includes an article that appeared in 1980 in the *Vajradhatu Sun,* excerpted from a talk given by Rinpoche in 1973 about his view of theater. The article, "Basic Sanity in Theater," may well have been given in connection with the 1973 theater conference itself. Here, Chögyam Trungpa says that "in order to perform, we have to relate to reality." He talks about learning to coordinate speech and body and discusses combining "the bodhisattva and yogic practices in our theater work." He also mentions an idea to create a school to pursue this training in theater, which he says would be "another kind of retreat practice, in fact."

After the theater conference in 1973, it does not appear that Chögyam Trungpa had a great deal of ongoing contact with the American avant-garde theater world. Jean-Claude van Itallie did arrange a meeting between Chögyam Trungpa and Peter Brook, which took place at Shantigar, Van Itallie's country residence near Charlemont, Massachusetts. Rinpoche's relationship with Van Itallie was an enduring one; in 1977, Rinpoche spent most of a year on retreat at Van Itallie's house. There was a second theater conference in 1974, but Rinpoche and his Mudra theater students conducted this event as an in-house training, without the avant-garde guests. Some of the "guest" performers in 1973 had, in any case, become Rinpoche's students, Lee Worley being one of the most prominent examples.[54]

54. A brief description of a later foray that Rinpoche made into spontaneous theater seems warranted before leaving the discussion of his work with theater. As discussed above, Allen Ginsberg talked quite a lot about Rinpoche's spontaneous approach to composing poetry and how that affected Ginsberg's own work. During a month-long teaching visit in New York in 1976, Rinpoche composed spontaneous plays, which took place late at night, usually at his residence, when he had to take medication before retiring for the night. Rinpoche would mimic seppuku, or ritual suicide, which ended with him taking his pills and seeming to collapse and die from having ingested poison. I happened to witness one of these plays in Boulder in the summer of 1976. That evening—and every evening that these plays took place—David Rome was the narrator of these spontaneous dramas. In fact, he was more precisely the translator, for Rinpoche would hold forth as though he were speaking Japanese—but since he didn't speak the language, he was just mimicking sounds he was familiar with, from Japanese movies and other situations. David would provide spontaneous translations of this pseudo-Japanese oratory. David writes: "To my knowledge, the seppuku performances were all in NYC in February 1976, and then just one took place at the Kalapa Court in Boulder to show people [what they

There were also a number of theatrical elements, or what might more properly be called pageantry, in the many ceremonies that Trungpa Rinpoche developed over the years, particularly in connection with his presentation of the Shambhala teachings in the last ten years of his life. Perhaps this is why he did not write plays during those years—he had other outlets for structuring the interplay of space and form within the context of presenting his work. In a sense, he was choreographing culture and society.

Calligraphy, Flower Arranging, and Dharma Art Installations

We come now to the consideration of Chögyam Trungpa's work in the areas of calligraphy and flower arranging and how he eventually combined these elements with his overall interest in design, resulting in the dharma art installations that he created. Although Rinpoche had begun creating calligraphies and brush and ink paintings while he was still in England, there is no information on when he first took up this discipline as art or whether he received any formal instruction in it. Throughout his seventeen years in America, he created many hundreds if not several thousands of calligraphies. As David Rome mentions in his excellent introduction to *The Art of Calligraphy: Joining Heaven and Earth*, "Rinpoche's calligraphies were almost always done for some specific purpose." He often created a calligraphy as a birthday or wedding gift. Many calligraphies were done to hang on the walls of his meditation centers, or dharmadhatus, and he personally calligraphed the names given to students when they took the Buddhist refuge and bodhisattva vows. In Tibet, he would have studied handwriting as part of his education. There, calligraphy was done with a bamboo pen. In the West, Rinpoche adopted the use of Japanese brushes and sumi ink. Brush and ink, as David Rome notes, gave him more fluidity and play in his art. Surely, too, Rinpoche's interest in brush painting was a reflection of his personal encounters with Japanese calligraphers. In 1970/71 when he first met Suzuki Roshi,

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were like]—probably the one you saw." I found the whole experience quite perplexing and hair-raising—and needless to say, quite dramatic. When Rinpoche "died," he really seemed to have lost consciousness, and I was worried that a doctor should be called—until he revived himself.

Rinpoche also was introduced to Kobun Chino Sensei, a master of Japanese calligraphy as well as a master of Zen. Later, Rinpoche shared interests in dharma and calligraphy with Taizan Maezumi Roshi, the founder of the Los Angeles Zen Center and a master calligrapher. In the 1980s, Rinpoche became a great friend of Shibata Kanjuro Sensei, a Japanese master of kyudo, or archery, who is also an accomplished calligrapher. Rinpoche encouraged his students to study kyudo with Sensei and included him in many Shambhala gatherings, where Rinpoche presented advanced teachings and invited Sensei to teach as well.

The majority of Rinpoche's calligraphies are of Tibetan and Sanskrit letters, words, and phrases. He also studied the kanji, or Chinese ideograms, and he did a number of calligraphies of kanji in the 1980s, particularly when he calligraphed terms connected with the Shambhala teachings, such as the phrase "Great Eastern Sun." He also did a few calligraphies of English words and some abstract brush and ink paintings. David Rome reflects on how Rinpoche's calligraphy evolved:

> Just as his poetic voice, which at first was imitative of both Tibetan and British traditional modes, released into something much freer and more idiosyncratic after his arrival in North America, so Rinpoche's use of brush and ink became progressively bolder and more original. (*The Art of Calligraphy*, p. 173)

As time went on, Rinpoche began to incorporate demonstrations of calligraphy into the dharma art seminars that he taught. Volume Seven of *The Collected Works* includes a series of these calligraphies, done using an overhead projector at a seminar in 1978, which were reproduced and published in the *Shambhala Sun* in 1992 with a commentary on heaven, earth, and man. *The Art of Calligraphy* contains beautiful reproductions of some of Rinpoche's finest calligraphies. Volume Seven includes the introductory material from the book, an essay by Rinpoche on heaven, earth, and man, some of the back matter from the book, and a selection of the calligraphies.

The essay from *The Art of Calligraphy* is a major statement of how Trungpa Rinpoche applied the principles of heaven, earth, and man to the creation of art and also how he incorporated the principles of the four karmas into his artistic work. Volume Six includes material on the four karmas presented in an early public seminar. In Volume Seven, the

discussion of the four karmas is, at least for this reader, somewhat mysterious in terms of their application to art, but the discussion of the four principles in and of themselves is quite down-to-earth and helpful. Rinpoche describes the first karma, pacifying, as "the cooling off of neurosis . . . gentleness and freedom from neurosis . . . pure and cool." He describes enriching as "the absence of arrogance and aggression"; magnetizing as "overcoming poverty"; and destroying as "destruction of laziness." He uses the four karmas to establish the ground, or the basic space, of the diagrams he creates, and then places the heaven, earth, and man principles within that ground. He also discusses how the principles of heaven, earth, and man apply to the development of discipline in art—and in life. He presents discipline here as an outgrowth of the artist's understanding of space and its relationship to the artist's point of view. He introduces another principle fundamental to his presentation of dharma art: that genuine art arises out of and encourages the synchronization of body and mind. The principle of harmony within oneself as the ground of art leads in the final section of the essay to the discussion of how harmony can manifest in society, as Great Eastern Sun vision, based on the rising sun of wakefulness rather than the setting sun of ignorance and indulgence.

As explained earlier, Chögyam Trungpa was a student of flower arranging in England in the 1960s, and in learning this discipline he would have worked directly with the principles of heaven, earth, and man, which is used to describe the different aspects of Japanese flower arrangements. During his years in the United States, Trungpa Rinpoche continued to practice ikebana, incorporating into his arrangements the principles of the five buddha families as time went on. He was particularly fond of using pine branches and chrysanthemums to make massive arrangements. Over the years, he had a number of exhibits of his arrangements and gave demonstrations of his work as part of dharma art seminars and in other contexts. Eventually, he moved from isolated arrangements to the creation of dharma art installations that transformed the entire space in the gallery in which his flower arrangements were placed. In "Art of Simplicity: 'Discovering Elegance,'" an interview in connection with an installation he did in Los Angeles at the LAICA Gallery in 1980, he said "Art should have its own environment altogether, its own entire world altogether, which beautifies the world, basically speaking." The evolution of Rinpoche's work with ikebana, from iso-

lated enterprise to enlightened culture, is discussed in the following comments sent to me by Ludwik Turzanski, who worked with Rinpoche in Colorado. Turzanski was a professor in the art department of the University of Colorado from the early 1970s until Rinpoche's death in 1987. Ludwik Turzanski writes:

> Working with Rinpoche . . . on dharma art is still very vivid in my mind and indeed in my heart as well. . . . Rinpoche and I discussed art the first time we met when he first arrived in Boulder. We found that we both admired the Japanese esthetic. Rinpoche was later to comment, when founding the Naropa Art Department, that an ideal work of art might encompass the Western sense of daring, the Tibetan appreciation of color, and the Japanese understanding of space.
>
> A few months after we met, Rinpoche called me to find some branches for him in the mountains when he wanted to do an ikebana arrangement. . . . I was called upon to personally assist Rinpoche in this way with his flower arranging after that time. I was to serve him in this capacity, joyfully, for the rest of his life.
>
> [In the early 1970s] I invited Rinpoche to do a project with my art students at the University of Colorado in Denver. After some discussions of the unfeasibility of finding enough flower-arranging equipment for everyone, we came up with the idea of "object arrangements" instead of using flowers. This idea worked so well that it later became the main exercise of the Dharma Art seminars.
>
> Around 1973, I arranged for a show at the Museum of Fine Arts Gallery at CU Boulder. Rinpoche did his first really large flower arrangement, and my students and I did smaller free-form arrangements of objects and flowers.[55]
>
> Another exhibit was arranged around 1975 for Rinpoche at the Emmanuel Gallery on the CU Denver campus. This was the first of the "environmental installations" which Rinpoche was to do in subsequent years several times in Boulder, again in Denver, and also in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The environmental aspect of these shows had to do with the fact that that whole gallery environment was considered as a unique space for the flower arrangements, working together, to articulate. Later, this idea was to be formalized into

55. Slides of these arrangements are housed in the Shambhala Archives.

an entrance room, a kitchen, study, tenno room,[56] Buddha room, warrior room,[57] and other spaces.

As the scope of this new project began to emerge, it became abundantly clear that one or two assistants working with Rinpoche, as in the past, would no longer be sufficient. So Rinpoche asked me to put together a group—"The Explorers of the Richness of the Phenomenal World"—to assist in this exhibit. Then came months of planning, design, and preparations. Mats, containers, and unique branch holders in many sizes were experimented with and built. Rocks, branches, vases, flower sources, etc., were researched. The Explorers were organized into departments and teams. Thus a framework emerged which was to serve as the basis of the skillful means not only for this but also for all subsequent shows. It was all very adventurous and exciting.

The Denver exhibit was the first time Rinpoche's artistic work was publicized to the general public. Although seemingly a bit shy when the show first opened its doors, Rinpoche showed great delight when a number of flower arrangers and artists came to the opening and wanted to meet the artist and chat. He and we thought that it was a splendid show.

[In 1974] Rinpoche held his first art seminar at Padma Jong in California, and there seems to have used the phrase "dharma art" for the first time publicly to describe his unique vision for an open-hearted and genuine art based on appreciation and nonaggression.[58]

After this, the two separate events—the environmental flower in-

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56. As interpreted by Chögyam Trungpa, the tenno room was a room in which formal meetings or discourse were conducted. There were tatami mats on the floor, where everyone participating in a gathering would be expected to sit. There were usually several calligraphies or Japanese brush paintings on display, as well as a flower arrangement and a few precious objects, such as a Japanese tea bowl or tea set, arranged for effect.

57. The Buddha room was, I believe, a room dedicated to meditation, while the warrior room was a room in which antique Japanese weaponry and armor were displayed. As interpreted by Chögyam Trungpa, the warrior room might have been the ancestral shrine of a Japanese samurai family.

58. Padma Jong was a rural practice center located in northern California, which was intended to become a contemplative center for the practice of the arts. One of the early students Rinpoche met in California in 1970 was Jerry Granelli, a jazz percussionist and composer, who found the land and was instrumental in the establishment of Padma Jong. Granelli also helped organize and taught in the music department at Naropa for many years. In 1974, Rinpoche taught a seminar entitled "Art in Everyday Life" at Padma Jong; in 1975, he conducted "The Dance of Enlightenment" seminar there.

stallation and the dharma art seminar—were combined into one and presented together in well-publicized and well-attended weekend events in Boulder, Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The events were organized and put together by a combination of the Boulder Explorers as well as new Explorer recruits from the Dharma center where the seminar and exhibit were being held.

The regular format for these three-day seminars consisted of talks (usually with slides) by Rinpoche, meditation practice, discussion groups, and hands-on workshops involving object arranging and related exercises. The meditation sessions, discussion groups, and workshops were conducted by senior students (Allen Ginsberg once presented a poetry workshop utilizing the principles of heaven, earth, and man) after they received instructions and demonstrations from Rinpoche himself. These were certainly marathon events for Rinpoche as well as for those of us who assisted him. But he seemed to relish being involved in it all, and his energy never flagged. Working with him and watching him was an extraordinary one-taste experience of exhaustion, letting go, and pure joy.

These seminars were attended by professional artists, filmmakers, musicians, and poets as well as people just interested in the arts, or simply by the person of Rinpoche himself. The grand finale of these events was the opening of the Installation with Rinpoche in attendance.[59]

This vivid memoir allows us to appreciate how Rinpoche's exhibitions developed from modest displays to great undertakings—in a way that seemed characteristic of so many things he was involved in. *Expansive* and *all-inclusive* are words that come to mind to describe his passion to include the environment and other sentient beings in his work with dharma art.

Volume Seven of *The Collected Works* includes the only formal talk on ikebana that Rinpoche is known to have given. At the end of 1982, Rinpoche and some of his students decided to form a society for the practice and appreciation of flower arranging. He named the group "Kalapa Ikebana," Kalapa being the name of the capital of the Kingdom of Shambhala. Students in the group studied flower arranging with various

59. E-mail communication from Ludwik Turzanski to Carolyn Rose Gimian, May 16, 2002.

teachers of ikebana. Rinpoche was not their primary instructor, but he met from time to time with the group, demonstrating arrangements and critiquing student work. In 1983, the group started the *Kalapa Ikebana Newsletter*, a quarterly that was published for a number of years.[60] "Perception and the Appreciation of Reality," Chögyam Trungpa's first and only public address on the subject of ikebana, appeared in the Winter 1984 issue.

At this point in the discussion of Rinpoche's ideas about art, it should hardly seem surprising that he opened his talk by saying that the topic was "perception and the appreciation of reality." He then spoke about some obstacles to creating a work of art, specifically thinking that one lacks talent or that one's upbringing hasn't prepared one to make an artistic statement. Rinpoche challenges the idea that an unusual talent is needed in order to create art. He says that "everyone who possesses the appreciation of sight, smell, sound, feelings, is capable of communicating with the rest of the world." This is the basis for artistic discipline, including the discipline of flower arranging. Turning more specifically to the particular school of flower arranging in which he was trained, Rinpoche comments that the Sogetsu School in Japan "does not only pay attention to flower arranging, but also it pays attention to sculpture and to creating an environment out of a variety of things." This gives us a clue as to how the discipline of ikebana itself contained the seed of the larger dharma art installations that Rinpoche undertook.

Volume Seven also includes two interviews conducted in connection with a major dharma art installation that took place in 1980 at the LAICA Gallery in Los Angeles. This installation was called "Discovering Elegance." Similar to what Ludwik Turzanski described above, the exhibit consisted of a number of rooms created and arranged by Rinpoche and his assistants, containing flower arrangements and calligraphies done for the installation. In these two interviews, Trungpa Rinpoche also expands the definition of dharma art. He describes it as "the principal way we are trying to create enlightened society." He also talks about working with chaos as a means of discovering harmony. Here, we begin to see how all of Trungpa Rinpoche's activities as an artist come together with his role in proclaiming the buddhadharma and the Shambhala teachings in

60. Karen Hayward, the founding editor of the newsletter, kindly sent me a complete set of copies for use in preparing *The Collected Works*.

the West. The way or path of the artist and the way of the bodhisattva and the warrior once again seem to converge in the same broad highway of wakefulness and working for the benefit of others.

Also included in Volume Seven, "Art and Education" is another article that echoes this theme. It is based on a public talk at the Naropa Institute in 1979. Here, Rinpoche describes how many of the principles of art that he articulated were reflected in and applied to the overall approach at Naropa. Here he says, "Art is environment. Education is the mind which relates with that environment." He says that art has to do with creating a bigger world: "The kind of art we are talking about tonight is big art."

Without photographs or access to the exhibits themselves, it is difficult to visualize the spaces that Rinpoche created in the dharma art installations. One wishes an illustrated catalogue had been prepared for at least one of them. The Shambhala Archives does have extensive photographic documentation of some of the exhibits, especially the installation at the LAICA Gallery, and the documentary film *Discovering Elegance*, referred to above in Baird Bryant's description of his work with Chögyam Trungpa, shows us the process of creating that installation, along with discussion of the principles of dharma art. None of these materials, however, form part of *The Collected Works*, so much must be left to the imagination of the reader.

Visual Dharma

In addition to its main focus—Chögyam Trungpa's activities as an artist and poet—Volume Seven features three essays in which Chögyam Trungpa comments and reflects on Buddhist iconography and art, not as inspiration for Western art, but as traditional disciplines in their own right. *Visual Dharma: The Buddhist Art of Tibet* presents his long introductory essay to a catalogue that accompanied an exhibit of Tibetan Buddhist art at the Hayden Gallery at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1975. (The illustrations from the catalogue and the commentary on the specific items pictured are not included here.) Here Rinpoche discusses traditional elements in Tibetan Buddhist iconography and how they are expressed in Tibetan Buddhist thangka paintings and rupas, or religious sculptures of important teachers and deities. "Em-

powerment" is taken from the liner notes to an album presenting recordings of Tibetan sadhanas, or religious liturgies, performed by His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa during his first visit to America in 1974. Rinpoche talks about the significance of the ceremonies themselves as well as about the ritual instruments and music that are an integral part of the ceremonies. "Disciples of the Buddha" is an in-depth interview with Rinpoche, conducted by Robert Newman and included in Newman's recent book by that title.[61] Rinpoche discusses the meditative realization that can be seen in the I-chou Lohans, Chinese statues of the disciples of the Buddha, which Rinpoche felt were powerful expressions of the meditative state of mind. He arranged to have a silkscreened banner made of a photograph of one of the lohans, to be used as an example and inspiration to students practicing meditation in the Shambhala Training meditation program.

Jean Thies, a longtime student of Rinpoche's, provided recollections on how the Visual Dharma exhibition came about and her experiences working on the exhibit:

> Sometime in 1973 a bunch of us were crowded into Rinpoche's bedroom at Tail of the Tiger [now Karmê Chöling]. Rinpoche said that he had been asked to do an exhibition at the Hayden Gallery at MIT and asked who might be interested in working on it. I jumped at the invitation.
>
> In the Spring of 1974, after some research, we made a list of possible lenders. Rinpoche came to the East Coast and we went on a trip. We went to Doris Wiener's gallery, the Newark Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Purchase College, Jacques Marchais, William Wolfe, and Yale. We saw many possibilities and started to assemble lists of what could be used. We also saw Jane Werner's collection in New York City. Karl Springer saw John Gilmore Ford in Baltimore and contacted some others. I had other sources as well, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
>
> By the early fall of 1974, a list of thangkas and rupas had been made, and we narrowed it down to what would be appropriate. Photos were acquired, we got the necessary permissions, etc.

61. Robert Newman conducted this interview with Trungpa Rinpoche in the 1970s, but his book *Disciples of the Buddha: Living Images of Meditation* was not published until 2001.

A number of us assembled at the 1974 Vajradhatu Seminary that fall. During the last part of the seminary our group spent part of each day with Rinpoche at his house. A slide would be projected, and Rinpoche would talk about it. Karl Springer, Sherab Chödzin Kohn, Larry Mermelstein, and I were there—and others who escape my memory.

Rinpoche used the text of Lodrö Thaye's *Treasury of Knowledge,* which has a chapter on Tibetan art: styles, methods, etc., which he referred to. The catalogue was created along with his marvelous introduction. Basically, the catalogue was written by Sherab with the lenders providing the measurements of the pieces, as well as me measuring some with a ruler. We also made a wonderful poster of a White Tara thangka from the Southampton, N.Y., museum for the exhibition.

To say the least, this was the richest and most wonderful time with Rinpoche. We worked every day. When it was over, and Karl and I were going out the door of Rinpoche's house, Karl said, "It will never be this good again." It was a precious time for us.

Things progressed, and when it came time to mount the exhibition, I went to many of the lenders, picked up the pieces, and drove them to Cambridge. The staff at the Hayden mounted the exhibition and Karl and I made our comments as to placement, sequence, etc. The opening was in the spring of 1975. The Boston Dharmadhatu presented a "Dharma Festival"—a week of various events. The opening was delightful, to my memory. Bruce McDonald, the curator from the Hayden, was totally great as was his assistant.

For me, it was the beginning of my education in Asian art. I had never really looked at a thangka before, and I became very interested in the art, particularly from the viewpoint of iconography. In retrospect, we now know a lot more about Tibetan painting and sculpture. Rinpoche knew what he was looking at but he was not an art historian. Nevertheless, his introduction remains an important document on the relation of the art of spirituality and practice.[62]

As in so many other areas of his artistic involvement, Chögyam Trungpa used this artistic undertaking as an opportunity to create a learning environment for a group of students. Jean Thies's description of

62. E-mail communication from Jean Thies to Carolyn Rose Gimian, April 2002.

the group energy involved in working with him is reminiscent of other times described by his students in this introduction: Ludwik Turzanski talking about the Explorers of the Phenomenal World creating dharma art installations with him, Lee Worley and Jean-Claude van Itallie describing the theater conference, and Johanna Demetrakas and Baird Bryant speaking about the Milarepa Film Project. Rinpoche was often unwilling to describe himself or focus the attention on himself as "the artist." This was not because he lacked confidence in his abilities but because he regarded the identification of oneself in that way as limiting and somewhat ego-enhancing. In relationship to these group undertakings, he also hesitated to emphasize his role as the artist. In discussing the dharma art installation at the LAICA Gallery, Rinpoche commented, "I don't consider myself as an artist, per se, at all. I don't regard myself as the author of this exhibition, obviously, but I feel very good about it, nonetheless. I am more proud of and pleased with the people around me, who have created the environment, than I am with myself." Clearly, this ability to delight in including others in the artistic enterprise was part of this man's genius. When one reads the memoirs of the students who worked closely with him, one gets the impression that he created huge artistic "happenings" for people—events where people's perceptions and frameworks were immeasurably enlarged.

As we conclude Volume Seven, dealing with art and artistic process, and move to Volume Eight, which presents Chögyam Trungpa's teachings on the Shambhala path of warriorship, we will also see a progression in Rinpoche's life and thought, as he became more and more interested in linking art with culture and society. One can easily see this in the movement from creating individual works of art, such as calligraphies and flower arrangements, to the interest in creating larger environmental installations. Beyond that, however, Rinpoche was interested in a much bigger project: he was interested in dharma art as a force in the creation of culture and society—and not just any society but an enlightened society. In a sense, he was taking the Japanese idea of *do,* or art as a way, beyond even its understanding in Japanese culture. He was essentially saying that art can create a world.

I asked one of the main designers who worked with Chögyam Trungpa over many years, Gina Etra Stick, quoted already above, to write about their design work together, to give some flavor of the

broader implications and the scope of his design work.[63] Gina's remarks help to tie together the various elements in Volume Seven and point us to the journey that lies beyond, in the Shambhala teachings:

> . . . the Vidyadhara [Chögyam Trungpa] set about designing a world. In my opinion, this activity of design was not just limited to art in the conventional sense. This activity was absolutely pervasive: there was nothing outside of this umbrella. Like the peeling of an onion to reveal essence, the intrinsic goodness within every situation can be revealed, and everything is included in sacredness. Like a thangka, there is no shadow for dirty laundry: everything is illuminated. So, in other words, *any* and *every* embodiment of the sacred *is* dharma art: dharma art is the language of sacredness.
>
> The Vidyadhara designed anything and everything, according to the structure and boundaries of sacred world, embodying what I think of as patterns of enlightenment, patterns of awake, patterns liberating the power inherent in conventional life. We designed heraldry, flags, banners, and brocade. We designed environments: shrines, buildings, gardens, parties. We designed ourselves from the inside (meditation) and out: uniforms, pins, precious jewelry, and clothing. The Vidyadhara devised events and rituals to bring mindfulness-awareness practice, or meditation in action, to how we move, walk, talk, sing, socialize: a ritual is the attitude of sacredness brought to events.
>
> He designed institutions, businesses, and our "corporate structure" into embodiments of his sadhana—his song of realization—flipping conventional structures into vehicles for spiritual practice and awakening. As exhilarating as this was, it was also totally claustrophobic: the Vidyadhara's message was that there is no time off from sacred view. All situations of gathering, meeting, and socializing were demanding opportunities for invocation, transformation, practice, and waking up.
>
> The design activity of the Vidyadhara was a major thread of his skillful means, teaching, and tireless effort to share with us his unique perception. . . . The goal of the Vidyadhara was not to create a perfect world. The goal was to create an environment that could accommodate and nurture the waking state of mind of the student warrior.

63. On this point, see also Judith Lief's introduction to *Dharma Art*.

> The goal, as has been said, was the path: to include everything we usually discard as "not spiritual" into the practice. Dharma art is an ongoing journey to recover our ability to see the extraordinary beauty and meaning *within* ordinary life.[64]

I think of Volume Seven as a beacon, drawing people to an appreciation of Rinpoche as an artist. Many people who know him as a Buddhist teacher have no idea that he was involved in the arts at all. Yet this is a singularly important part of his contribution to dharma in America. *The Art of Calligraphy* is a wonderful showcase for his calligraphy, and *Dharma Art* brings together his ideas on art, artistic process, and aesthetics, but there is as yet no publication or other vehicle that fully captures and conveys the visual power and full expanse of his artistry. A coffee table book with full-color reproductions of his design work and dharma art installations would be a great step, along with quality color reproductions of his photographs. The completion of a film based on the principles of the Milarepa Film Project would also convey much more about Chögyam the artist, and further exhibits of his work and dharma art installations would both inform and provoke us to look further, not just at his work but more deeply into our own perception. For it is not purely to honor Rinpoche or to enshrine him as a great artist that additional offerings are called for. Rather, his work was intended to challenge us, to cheer us up, and to enliven our path through the world. It would be a great gift to many to see that his work is fully documented, so that it can be passed on, appreciated, and practiced in the future. In this regard, the work of his students is also extremely important. Those who studied closely with him need to be encouraged to discuss and show in greater depth what they learned from him and how they are now applying this in their own work.

In a sense, Chögyam Trungpa's work as an artist was among the most revolutionary parts of his teaching. He truly believed that art can change the world. In this belief, he was focused not on the content of art but on how art can alter perception. If you can change the way people see the world, he taught, then they will change the world they live in. In essence, this is the premise of enlightened society. As he said in *The Art of Calligraphy:*

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64. E-mail communication from Gina Etra Stick to Carolyn Rose Gimian, 2002.

> We would like to organize and create a decent society. We could be slightly, positively arrogant by even saying "enlightened society." . . . You have a tremendous responsibility: the first is to yourself, to become gentle and genuine; the second is to work for others in that same way. It is very important to realize how powerful all of us are. What we are doing may seem insignificant, but this notion of dharma art will be like an atomic bomb you carry in your mind. (pp. 212, 215)

Chögyam Trungpa saw the transformation of society as the means to help others on a much greater scale, never ignoring the individual's place or responsibility, as he makes clear in the quote above, but joining that with the larger needs of a good human society. Art played, not a tangential, but an absolutely central role in that view.

Having fully incorporated the view of artistic disciplines as a way of awakening, Chögyam Trungpa turned to art as one of the tools in the warrior's arsenal of wakefulness. Similarly, we turn from the consideration of Chögyam Trungpa as an artist in Volume Seven to his role as great warrior-king in Volume Eight, another extraordinary chapter in an altogether extraordinary life.

One may understand this last chapter of his life and teachings more easily if one keeps in mind, not only his dedication to truth and beauty, but also the sense of play and humor that is so evident throughout his artistic enterprises. Chögyam Trungpa was a man who saw lots to cheer you up in the phenomenal world. One can see how much *joy* he took in the making of movies, the writing of plays, the stroke of calligraphy, the heaven, earth, and man of arranging space. He joined joy and sadness in this dance of delight and was able to share with so many others the self-existing sense of humor he found in everyday life. As an artist, he loved the broad smile of reality. As a Shambhala warrior, he showed that this smile has teeth! To that experience we turn our attention in Volume Eight.

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December 15, 2002
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Nova Scotia

DHARMA ART

EDITED BY
JUDITH L. LIEF



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Editor's Introduction

THIS BOOK INTRODUCES Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching on meditation, perception, and artistic expression, which he termed dharma art. *Dharma* means "norm" or "truth." In the context of art, it refers to "the state before you lay your hand on your brush, your clay, your canvas—very basic, peaceful, and cool, free from neurosis." *Art* refers to all the activities of our life, including any artistic disciplines that we practice. It is not an occupation; it is our whole being.

In a meeting in 1982 with the Naropa Institute arts faculty, the Vidyadhara referred to artistic practice as ongoing and all-pervasive. For instance, if you are a musician, you are a musician always, not just while you are playing your instrument. Your awareness of sound and silence is a twenty-four-hour practice. It applies to the way your knife clinks in a restaurant, the way the car door closes, the way somebody sneezes.

In Tibet the Vidyadhara studied a variety of traditional artistic forms, including monastic dance, poetry, calligraphy, and thangka painting. He liked to tell stories of the rigor of his dance training, in which he would need to hold his arm aloft for hours beating a hand drum, until his arm would swell up and he would reach the point of exhaustion. In later years, despite his partial paralysis, he could still demonstrate dance moves from his early training, including dances from the folk tradition as well.

When Trungpa Rinpoche came to England in 1963, he thoroughly immersed himself in the study of Western arts and culture. His interests were wide ranging, including architecture, photography, painting, writing, theater, and music. He also pursued an interest in Japanese arts,

including calligraphy and flower arranging, which he studied with Stella Coe of the Sogetsu School. In 1972, he published *Mudra,* his first book of poetry. It included many poems written in England. Through his new wife, Diana Mukpo, an accomplished equestrian, he developed an appreciation for the art of dressage. Throughout his seventeen years of teaching in North America, the Vidyadhara actively pursued his artistic disciplines and followed his far-ranging interests with immense inquisitiveness and delight.

The Vidyadhara practiced calligraphy on a regular basis and created numerous calligraphies, primarily for his meditation centers and as gifts for students and friends. At the time of taking the refuge vow and again at the time of the bodhisattva vows, students would each receive an original calligraphy of their dharma name. Occasionally he would donate calligraphies to be used in fund-raising auctions. He illustrated points in his dharma art seminars by executing spontaneous calligraphies on transparencies that could be displayed to the audience by means of an overhead projector. In that way, the students could see the process as well as the final result. In his calligraphy, the Vidyadhara worked with Japanese brushes rather than pens, often combining Japanese brush and ink with Tibetan language forms. Such a fusion of forms and methods from different cultures—primarily Tibet, China, Japan, India, England, and North America—characterized his style.

Poetry was a regular and ongoing aspect of the Vidyadhara's daily life. Most often, he would create spoken poetry spontaneously, in informal small group settings. He seldom wrote his poems down; instead, students would transcribe his poetry as he recited it. He often invited his students to participate as well, contributing whole spontaneous poems or lines of group poems. In meetings with the Naropa writing faculty, the Vidyadhara introduced a number of traditional Tibetan writing exercises, based on threefold logic. He encouraged the tradition of spontaneous recitation and the experience of being on the spot without the support of a written text to follow.

When Trungpa Rinpoche came to North America in 1970, he met many artists and poets, and a number of his early students were accomplished artists, such as the poet Allen Ginsberg, the dancer Barbara Dilley, and the musician Jerry Granelli. He also made a close connection with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, Maezumi Roshi, and a number of other Zen teachers and so continued his interest in the link between Zen and tantra

and in Japanese style. He brought with him from Great Britain a great appreciation of English style and design, discipline, etiquette, ceremony, and court forms.

The Vidyadhara also loved to go to the movies and to both observe and create theater. In 1973, the Vidyadhara directed a theater conference in Boulder that attracted many pivotal figures, including Robert Wilson and Jean-Claude van Itallie. He subsequently formed an ongoing theater workshop called Mudra Theater Group. Working with Mudra Theater, the Vidyadhara developed a sequence of awareness exercises called mudra space awareness practice. He also wrote and directed several plays, including *Prajna, Kingdom of Philosophy, Child of Illusion,* and *Water Festival.*

The Vidyadhara pursued his interest in filmmaking in many ways. In the early seventies, he hosted the Milarepa Film Workshop, to discuss filmmaking and develop a film based on the life of Tibet's poet-saint Milarepa. With a small group of filmmakers, he traveled to Sweden to visit the Museum Ethnographia, where a series of magnificent Milarepa *thangkas had been stored for years but seldom seen the light of day. The* museum staff graciously agreed to pull out the thangkas for viewing and gave permission to the Vidyadhara and camera crew to both film and photograph the entire collection. Unfortunately, although much work was done to develop the Milarepa film, it was not completed due to technical problems with the film. However, the technology now exists to correct these problems, and the film may be completed at some future date.

In the late seventies, the Vidyadhara encouraged the development of a for-profit film company called Centre Productions in Boulder, Colorado. Through Centre Productions, he worked on the direction and part of the actual filming of *Discovering Elegance,* a film based on the process of setting up his environmental installations. In early meetings with the Centre Production staff, the Vidyadhara discussed principles of dharma art as they applied to filmmaking. At the request of his students, he expanded on these informal talks in a series of public seminars on dharma art which form the basis for much of this book. In the eighties, the Vidyadhara worked with Centre Productions on a film about the life of the Karmapa, called *The Lion's Roar.*

In his approach to art, the Vidyadhara stressed collaboration as opposed to solo endeavors. He was well aware of the danger of ownership

in art and the problem of feeding ego through art. He discouraged his students from clinging to their identity as artists and encouraged them to think bigger and more inclusively. He also encouraged artists to establish communities. Two artistic communities were formed in the early seventies under his auspices: Padma Jong in Northern California and the Boulder Craft House, which formed the first artists' cooperative in the Boulder area. The Vidyadhara also was involved in the development of a commercial design firm in Boulder, called Centre Design Studio, and served as board chairman. He was an active participant in a variety of design projects under the auspices of Centre Design, most notably the design of a local jewelry store called Kensington's.

Trungpa Rinpoche paid meticulous personal attention to all aspects of the design of his centers, from corporate logos and lapel pins to architecture and furnishings. As his organizations grew and matured, he delegated many things to his senior students, but he rarely delegated design work. He did not view such work as merely decorative, but as having power to direct the energy and set the tone of the whole enterprise.

Having been brought up in a culture where you can take down your tent, roll up your thangkas and rugs, travel to a new location, and quickly set up an elegant and sanctified space out of nothing, Trungpa Rinpoche translated the flavor of nomadic tent-culture into a Western context. He designed a series of calligraphed banners and standards that were displayed in his centers internationally. In designing meditation halls for his Western students, the Vidyadhara was very much influenced by Western Zen, and incorporated both Tibetan and Japanese elements. For instance, he used the round Japanese sitting cushions called zafus, but he had them made in red and yellow, rather than black or brown as in Zen. Later, he developed his own unique style of meditation cushion, called a gomden, which is placed on top of a traditional small Japanese mat called a zabuton.

Trungpa Rinpoche continually exhorted his students to respect the forms of their own culture and not to succumb to fascinations with things Eastern. In preparing for the visit of a leading Tibetan dignitary, His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, in 1974, he encouraged his rather scruffy students to observe proper Western decorum: proper posture and table manners, suits and ties, haircuts, dresses. At the same time, he gave a crash course in Tibetan manners. He wanted his students to be equally

at ease with the conventions of tea drinking English style or in the style of the salty butter tea of Tibet.

Trungpa Rinpoche worked with the details of the environment and at the same time with the details of personal dignity and decorum. In this regard, he introduced a series of lapel pin designs, which over time became numerous and elaborated, with each club or organization having its own design. Trungpa Rinpoche did not view these pins simply as identifying symbols, but more like seed syllables, which, though small, contain the essence of the power and magic of the teachings. He did not emphasize form for form's sake, but tried to point out to his students, many of whom had been disillusioned by what they considered the empty and hypocritical religious forms of their childhood, the power of form to teach and to transform. In this sense, he used art all along to convey the essence of things as they are.

In 1974 the Vidyadhara founded the Naropa Institute, North America's only accredited Buddhist-inspired university, and his interplay with Western artists continued. Summer arts festivals blossomed into a year-round college in which the arts departments play a central role to this day. Naropa's creative writing department, the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, was formed by Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman. Barbara Dilley formed the Naropa Institute dance program. Naropa Theater was begun by Lee Worley. And Naropa's program in world music and jazz was founded by Jerry Granelli and Bill Douglas. The Vidyadhara hoped that one day Naropa would have a full array of fine arts as well as applied arts and crafts, as did Nalanda University in medieval India.

Summers, Naropa hosted an extraordinary gathering of faculty and students and served as a catalytic meeting point for a number of prominent avant-garde artists and performers, including John Cage, Meredith Monk, Jean-Claude van Itallie, Colin Wolcott, William Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Robert Frank, Anne Waldman, and Diane DiPrima. The Vidyadhara wanted Naropa to be a spiritual center as well as an artistic center and to host leading contemplatives from the array of world spiritual and psychological traditions. This would provide the ground for what came to be known as contemplative education, in which the various fields of knowledge could be grounded in spiritual depth and creativity.

The Vidyadhara took a great interest in Western music and was espe-

cially fond of Mozart and Beethoven. But his musical interests were wide ranging and included the music of China, Japan, India, and Indonesia as well. He wrote a number of songs and often, at the end of programs, joined his students in singing sessions. He worked closely with one of his students, Robert Murchison, in designing and building a large traditional Tibetan drum.

The Vidyadhara's interest in the arts flourished in the late seventies, when he presented a series of flower-arranging exhibits, environmental installations, art exhibits, and seminars on dharma art. He connected the stream of teaching on dharma art with the principles of the Shambhala tradition he was emphasizing at that time. In gathering materials for his installations, he worked with the principle of inherent richness, called yün in Tibetan. He trained his students to recognize this quality of richness and power, whether they were selecting the fine art or choosing a tie, and to appreciate the discipline of paying attention to detail.

The Vidyadhara himself paid meticulous attention to every detail of his environmental installations. He would go to the flower market before dawn to pick out the freshest, choicest flowers for his arrangements. He also had the uncanny ability to magnetize people to loan their priceless heirlooms for the installations. Once he came across an eight-foot statue of Yung-lo which he very much wanted to use in his exhibit. The statue was extremely valuable, and at first the owner was reluctant to part with it. But upon hearing of the Vidyadhara's deep connection with the Yung-lo lineage of China, he agreed to loan it free of charge.

To help with his artwork, the Vidyadhara founded a group called the Explorers of the Richness of the Phenomenal World, with whom he worked closely to assist in his exhibits and installations, particularly in gathering materials for large flower arrangements. He also founded a school of flower arranging called Kalapa Ikebana. The Vidyadhara also continued to pursue photography and encouraged the development of a photographic society, called Miksang, by his Vajra Regent, Ösel Tendzin.

The dharma art seminars conducted at the Naropa Institute and elsewhere were a rich mix of lectures, discussions, meditation practice, art exhibits and demonstrations, and spontaneous compositions of calligraphy, poetry, and flower arrangement. To give students a simple intuitive exercise, embodying the principles underlying dharma art, the Vidyadhara introduced the practice of object arranging. In this practice, stu-

dents worked with the placement of simple forms (usually three) in space (usually on a sheet of paper).

In 1980, the Vidyadhara began his association and friendship with Kanjuro Shibata Sensei, the twentieth-generation bowmaker (onyumishi) to the emperor of Japan. Through Shibata Sensei, the Vidyadhara introduced kyudo, or Japanese archery, to his students and, through Mrs. Kiyoko Shibata, the art of the Japanese tea ceremony as well. With Shibata Sensei he formed the Ryuko Kyudojo group (initially Jvalasara). In the early eighties, the Vidyadhara also formed Kalapa Cha, a society for the study and practice of the way of tea.

Another expression of the Vidyadhara's artistry was the development of a series of festivals for the Shambhala community. In designing the Midsummer's Day festival in particular, he tried to impart some of the pageantry and ritual splendor of traditional Tibetan folk festivals, with parades, banners, dancing, theater, music, and sporting events.

The Vidyadhara carried his artistry into his home, an idea very much stressed in his dharma art teachings. He took an interest in all the details of his household, including architectural and interior design, landscape design, furniture arrangements, cooking, cleaning, forms of etiquette, dress, and service.

It could be said that in his many teaching activities, Trungpa Rinpoche was always at heart an artist. For many of his students, the essence of what they learned was transmitted through gesture, environment, and artistic creativity. The Vidyadhara's inquisitiveness and love of the great variety of artistic expressions, and his respect for the power of art to awaken and liberate, were unbounded. For that reason, he emphasized the teachings of dharma art for all his students—artists and nonartists alike.

This book is based on a selection of dharma art teachings—courses, seminars, public talks, and discussions—presented in a variety of settings throughout North America. The sources for each chapter are given in the back of the book. May this important stream of teachings awaken our appreciation for the richness of this colorful and challenging world and our compassion to awaken such appreciation in others.

Dharma Art—Genuine Art

A letter written on the occasion of the Naropa Institute's first summer program, July 1974.

THE TERM *dharma art* does not mean art depicting Buddhist symbols or ideas, such as the wheel of life or the story of Gautama Buddha. Rather, dharma art refers to art that springs from a certain state of mind on the part of the artist that could be called the meditative state. It is an attitude of directness and unself-consciousness in one's creative work.

The basic problem in artistic endeavor is the tendency to split the artist from the audience and then try to send a message from one to the other. When this happens, art becomes exhibitionism. One person may get a tremendous flash of inspiration and rush to "put it down on paper" to impress or excite others, and a more deliberate artist may strategize each step of his work in order to produce certain effects on his viewers. But no matter how well-intentioned or technically accomplished such approaches may be, they inevitably become clumsy and aggressive toward others and toward oneself.

In meditative art, the artist embodies the viewer as well as the creator of the works. Vision is not separate from operation, and there is no fear of being clumsy or failing to achieve his aspiration. He or she simply makes a painting, poem, piece of music, or whatever. In that sense, a complete novice could pick up a brush and, with the right state of mind, produce a masterpiece. It is possible, but that is a very hit-and-miss approach. In art, as in life generally, we need to study our craft, develop our skills, and absorb the knowledge and insight passed down by tradition.

But whether we have the attitude of a student who could still become more proficient in handling his materials, or the attitude of an accom-

plished master, when we are actually creating a work of art there is a sense of total confidence. Our message is simply one of appreciating the nature of things as they are and expressing it without any struggle of thoughts and fears. We give up aggression, both toward ourselves, that we have to make a special effort to impress people, and toward others, that we can put something over on them.

Genuine art—dharma art—is simply the activity of nonaggression.

Discovering Elegance

We have to be honest, real, and very earthy; and we need to really appreciate things as they are. They are so beautiful and wonderful already, but in order to appreciate that, it takes time and discipline—so much discipline.

When I was discovered as a *tulku,* which is a Tibetan word meaning "reincarnation of a previous teacher," at the age of seventeen months, I was enthroned as the abbot of the Surmang group of monasteries. At the age of sixteen, I was given the responsibility of governing Surmang district, which had about forty thousand people and covered a large area in Tibet, maybe the size of Vermont. Our province was quite happy and prosperous, and our basic way of maintaining the economy was by exporting timber to the highlands, where there were no trees. The altitude of our place was eighteen thousand feet high. Beyond that altitude there were no trees that could be used for building houses and so forth. There was only shrubbery, small bushes of tamarisk and rhododendrons, and so forth.

The way we led our province and survived our troubles was largely by maintaining farmhouses and the farming life. Everybody owned cattle or, in the English language, what you call yaks. But yak is actually only the masculine, or male cattle; the female is called a dri. So there is no such thing as yak's milk. We exported a lot of butter, from nurturing dri and from large numbers of sheep, which were also regarded as tremendous resources.

We exported many different varieties of things, because our province happened to be on the threshold of the highlands and the lowlands. They were not exactly highlands and lowlands from a geographical point of view, since they were all about eighteen thousand feet high; but at the

same time, there were mountains and valleys, meadows and plateaus, and high mountain grazing. We produced the best meat, and good cattle (dri and yak). Our particular part of Tibet supposedly produced among the best milk, yogurt, cheese, and butter. The cheese was not produced in the Western style but was just purely part of the milking situation: when there was an early lambing season, cheese was used as part of the diet. We had another type of cheese which was made from powdered tiny sweet potato–type things. We also used underripe grains that were still green and therefore very potent and fresh. It's like the traditional concept of picking young green tea before it becomes fully grown, like some of the green tea from China and Japan. The English type of gunpowder tea is also collected before it is fully matured, so it's fresh and adolescent. Therefore it is very tasty and good for your system. In our province we also had salt lakes. The salt lakes in the Surmang district were not regarded as having the highest-quality salt, but what was called red salt. Groups of people owned particular lakes, maybe a one-fifth-acre salt lake. They worked with the salt lake, scooping out the salt from the water and drying it and so forth. So we also exported salt. That's how we lived in our province.

The monasteries survived on the basis of creating certain funds. Suppose you had a feast or ceremonial time, which might last for ten days—a fund for that particular festivity would be created. When that fund was created, people would be able to make offerings to the monks and to create shrine offerings at the same time. Such a fund might cost, for example, seventy-five sheep and maybe a several-mile-long field of barley and wheat. A person or group of people would manage such an event, and in that way the ceremony could happen. The propaganda that the Chinese Communists put out is not true, from that point of view. What has been said by the Communists is that we flogged our people and squeezed the peasants so that they had to come up with their offerings. That's not particularly true. It's very hard to express truth, I suppose, but as far as I remember myself, that is what we did. At the time there was also the creation of a continuous seminary in our monastery. I looked into the situation, trying to organize the funding part. A fund in that case didn't mean lots of money in the bank or anything like that. Funding meant how many acres of ground that produce grain and how many heads of animals—how many animals to be used for milking and

how many sheep for the creation of wool. So in that way, we maintained ourselves.

You may wonder why I'm telling you all these things about how we led our life in Tibet, but I think it has something to do with the situation of North Americans. In North America, people graduate from college and leave home—or sometimes leave home even before that. There's no sense of home then. They begin to live out of a suitcase and get a job—secretarial, management, depending on their capabilities. People begin to develop an interesting relationship with reality in that way. You don't see how things are produced, what things are made out of, how things have been done. You might see a silk-screened design and like it, so you buy it without knowing anything about the process of silk-screening. Or you might buy a carpet, not knowing the weavers or the carpetry world at all. And when things go wrong, usually we call a specialist.

Dharma art is not so much that you should be artistic, that you should paint a lot of pictures, compose music, or at least play music. And it is not that you should develop some fruition of beauty. That seems to be a problematic situation here, and it was exactly the same in Tibet. If I had not been made governor of my province, I probably also wouldn't have known how things worked. I probably would have taken the same attitude that some of you might have. And I might have said, "Now we're having this festival, so why is this food coming, what's wrong with it?" I probably would have gotten pissed off. But in order to be a governor, and a practical person, I needed to know how successful and luscious and powerful such a ceremony could be, and how it was based on the economy and morale of the people, at the same time.

The question is: How are we going to organize our life so that we can afford to produce beautiful things, not at the expense or the suffering of others? That seems to be the basic point from a practical point of view. Then there is something beyond that, which is the concept of art altogether, or dharma art. It is a question of discovering elegance and dharma art, which may be two slightly different topics. Dharma art comes first; discovering elegance may come later. So dharma art is not showmanship, or having some talent that nobody had before, having an idea that nobody's done before. Instead, the main point of dharma art is discovering elegance. And that is a question of state of mind, according to the Buddhist tradition.

At this point I am talking about the artists, rather than the perceivers

of art alone. Traditionally, it is a long and arduous process to produce and manufacture art. For instance, to make paint, somebody has to grind vermilion stone in order to make the color vermilion; somebody has to collect greenery in order to make green; somebody has to grind and work with deposits in a cave in order to make blue; somebody has to collect deposits on the earth in order to make orange. Somebody has to work with the soot coming out of bark or the sap of trees to make ink. Everything is made in that way. Before you get into your fancy work as artists, you have to know the pain and the misery, or maybe deny it, that is involved in producing such a work of art. Take the example of the flowers we use in flower arranging. They do not just bloom in heaven and God just shoves them down to us. They need earth, soil, lots of manure, and the protection of the weather, so that finally we have a beautiful chrysanthemum, beautiful irises.

From the modern American point of view, you can just go to the store and buy things and pick them up. That is not quite a good attitude, let alone elegance. People have to realize how things are made and produced, how they happen to be so beautiful, so lovely. Once something is at its best, its fruition, we tend to neglect that. But we are just starting with spring at this point, we haven't even gone through a summer, let alone autumn. We are far from harvesting. I could say that quite safely. Whether you are the greatest artist who has already made your name and made a good contribution to the world, or at the beginner's level, we have to realize how difficult it is to start the whole thing. We have to work with the ground, path, and fruition levels together. That is not a particularly easy thing to do.

We really have to drop the idea that if we are driving for a long time on the highway and we get tired and the signpost says, "Food, lodging, and blah-blah-blah," we can turn off and check into a motel, go to sleep, eat food, have a good time, and go on the next day. We can't always use our world like that. We have to have some respect for the people who work hard on such situations. We cannot simply say, "Things are fine, convenient; therefore I might as well take advantage of it, as long as I have money." Usually places charge based on how much work they put in and, according to that, how much production they have achieved. But we don't think about that, particularly. As ordinary, regular, naive people, in fact, we might tell our friends, "Such-and-such a motel is cheaper than such-and-such a motel." Why is it cheaper? It is cheaper because

they worked with prefabrications. At the more expensive hotels, it was more difficult, because they put in more effort and energy to make their place splendid and good. We ignore so much of our practicality.

The medieval world produced fantastic works of art, as you know: music, painting, instruments, and everything. In the medieval world, some of the greatest artists were only known to be great artists after they died, because when they were living, they worked so organically, trying to put things together. When the fruition of their work came along, they were so pleased and satisfied; but at the same time, their energy ran out and they died. So even though you might have talent at an early stage of life, like Mozart, nonetheless art is still a manual process. Everything has to be manual and realistic. Then you discover the elegance and beauty, because you begin to realize how much energy and exertion it takes to manufacture or display the best of the best. That is what it takes for breathtaking music and breathtaking paintings to happen at the fruition level. You don't have that right at the beginning.

If you want to become an artist and you want to have the best of everything, you can't just have it. You have to start by paying attention to reality. You need to learn to eat properly, to cook properly, to clean your house or your room, to work with your clothes. You need to work with your basic reality. Then you go beyond that, and you begin to have something much more substantial. And beyond that, you actually begin to produce a master artistic world altogether. That is the same as in my tradition of Kagyü Buddhism. It is long and arduous; you can't become suddenly good at something. Of course, it is possible that overnight you come up with a good gadget, a good idea; the next day you patent that and begin to manufacture it, and suddenly you become a multimillionaire. That could happen. But we do not regard that as a true way of doing things. We are bypassing a lot of training, discipline, and reality. And often, when people produce a good work of art in that way and make a lot of money suddenly, they end up committing suicide, dead. Just like Marilyn Monroe.

We have to be honest, real, and very earthy, and we need to really appreciate things as they are. They are so beautiful and wonderful already, but in order to appreciate that, it takes time and discipline—so much discipline.

Great Eastern Sun

You wait for the good moment—the infamous first thought—but nothing happens. There is a thought of giving up the whole thing, or else trying to crank something up artificially. But neither of those things works. Then you sort of become distracted by something else—and when you come back, there it is!

INVOLVING OURSELVES with visual dharma seems to be very straightforward: working with oneself, working with others, and working with oneself and others together. Working with oneself brings the realization of one's own elegance. Working with others means trying to develop delight in others. And the two together, elegance and delight, bring a basic sense of richness and goodness, which is known as Great Eastern Sun vision. Obviously, you must know by this point that a work of art brings out the goodness and dignity of a situation. That seems to be the main purpose of art altogether.

Great Eastern Sun terminology is used quite a lot in the Shambhala tradition, which is very ancient, and it is also applicable to the present. The three principles of Great, East, and Sun have specific meanings. *Great* means having some kind of strength, energy, and power. That is, we are not fearful or regretful in presenting our expressions or our works of art—or, for that matter, in our way of being. That power is absolutely fearless. If we were cowardly, we would have a problem in trying to handle an object, or even thinking of touching it or arranging it, much less in arranging our life or our world. We would be afraid to do any of that. So the absence of that fear is fearlessness, which develops out of delight. We are so delighted that we spontaneously develop that kind of strength and energy. Then we can move freely around our world with-

out trying to change it particularly, but just expressing what needs to be expressed or uncovering what needs to be uncovered by means of our art.

East is the concept of wakefulness. The direction in which we are going, or the direction we are facing, is unmistakable. In this case, the word *East* is not necessarily the geographical direction. Here, it means simply the place you see when you can open your eyes and look fearlessly ahead of you. Since this East is unconditional, it does not depend on south, west, or north. It is just unconditional East as basic wakefulness.

Then we have the third category, or Sun. *Sun* has a sense of all-pervasive brilliance, which does not discriminate in the slightest. It is the goodness that exists in a situation, in oneself, and in one's world, which is expressed without doubt, hesitation, or regret. The Sun represents the idea of no laziness, and the Sun principle also includes the notion of blessings descending upon us and creating sacred world. The Sun also represents clarity, without doubt.

Those three categories are the nature of Great Eastern Sun. We could say that they are trying to bring us out and to uncover the cosmic elegance that exists in our lives and in our art. In contrast, the notion of *setting sun* is that of wanting to go to sleep. Obviously, when the sun sets, you go to sleep. You want to go back to your mother's womb, to regress, appreciating that you can hide behind dark clouds. That is to say, there is no bravery; it is complete cowardice. At the same time, there is struggle: you do not want to step out of this world completely; you are still trying to survive, still trying to prevent death. So the setting-sun world is based on a psychological attitude of fear. There is constant fear, and at the same time it is deliberately suicidal.

We have a lot of examples of setting-sun art. Some of them are based on the principle of entertainment. Since you feel so uncheerful and solemn, you try to create artificial humor, manufactured wit. But that tends to bring a tremendous sense of depression, actually. There might be a comic relief effect for a few seconds, but apart from that there is a constant black cloud, the black air of tormenting depression. As a consequence, if you are rich you try to spend more money to cheer yourself up—but you find that the more you do, the less it helps. There is no respect for life in the setting-sun world. The only respect you can find there is in the brotherhood of human beings who are trying to combat death with the wrong end of the stick. I'm afraid at this point I have to be biased; there's nothing positive I can say about setting sun at all. But

that actually helps, in that we can see black and white clearly and properly, so there is no doubt whatsoever.

Obviously, Great Eastern Sun vision does not mean that the good people have to win all the time in plays or films. It is not all that simple-minded. For instance, in the Buddhist tradition, there's a series of stories about the Great Bodhisattva being eaten and recycled, so there is no problem there. That seems to be okay. And the same thing could be said about the Bible, which contains the crucifixion and resurrection, but still continues that vision. So the question of Great Eastern Sun versus setting sun is not so much whether somebody physically wins a victory, but whether psychologically that sense of vision is continued.

The three categories—Great, East, and Sun—are categories of awaking or arising. But I should mention that there is a difference between rising sun and Great Eastern Sun. Rising sun is like a baby; there is potential. The Great Eastern Sun is fully developed, a fully matured sun, whereas the rising sun is an infant sun. So the idea of Great Eastern Sun is to be fully confident and fully developed, full speed ahead. The Buddhist analogy is that buddha nature exists in you, fully developed. You don't have to try to bring buddha nature into you, but you are already fully awake, on the spot.

The Great Eastern Sun principle has three additional categories or attributes. The first is a quality of *peace.* It is permeated with confidence and dignity, that is, nonaggression. The essence of a good work of art is absence of aggression. Sometimes you might find the elegance and dignity so overwhelming that it's threatening, but that has nothing to do with any aggression that exists in that work of art. It is just that you are so cowardly that you get frightened. So you shouldn't regard such an overwhelmingly splendid presentation as aggression.

The second category of the Great Eastern Sun principle is known as *showing the path.* That is, the artist begins to develop some sense of discriminating-awareness wisdom in picking and choosing between wholesome and unwholesome situations. We are not just being naive and accepting everything, but some discrimination takes place, which shows the path from the point of view of Great Eastern Sun vision. This showing of the path could be regarded as first thought best thought. First thought best thought is not necessarily a chronological event. Quite possibly, the first thought might be the worst thought, chronologically speaking. In this case, first thought refers to that thought which is fresh and free.

In the beginning, there is some kind of gap. After the gap, there is an expression of that gap, which is first thought. It is not particularly vague; rather, it is very definite, extremely definite. And it has discriminating capabilities. For instance, when you have your paper and ink and brush, and you project your Great Eastern Sun vision, at first nothing might come into your mind. You might think that you are running out of inspiration. You wait for the good moment—the infamous first thought—but nothing happens. There is a thought of giving up the whole thing, or else trying to crank something up artificially. But neither of those things works. Then you sort of become distracted by something else—and when you come back, there it is! The whole thing exists there. That little flicker of gap brings you to first thought. Then you have the confidence and dignity to execute your brushstroke, your calligraphy, or your painting. And the same thing could apply to musicians or photographers, or to any artist. So showing the path is a guideline of how to see these situations on the spot, on the "first thought best thought" level.

The third category is *victory over the three worlds*. That is somewhat mysterious sounding, but we have to look at the concept of victory. Usually victory seems to mean being able to beat somebody, becoming the best either by sheer pressure, sheer one-upmanship, or sheer knowledge. But from the Great Eastern Sun point of view, the concept of victory is a natural sense of existence that provides no need for challenge, so no enemies exist. Since there is no regret and no laziness, you begin to appreciate the sacredness of the world. Everything is complete and extremely wholesome, so there is no problem. The threefold world is the world of heaven, the world of earth, and the world that joins heaven and earth together, which is your physical body, your speech, and your psychological state of mind. So there is victory over the neuroses of all those realms.

To summarize, the concept of Great Eastern Sun vision is threefold. First is having a sense of goodness in yourself. Second, having some sense of decency in yourself already, you can project that to your audience, your clientele, or the world in general. In that way a tremendous trust is established: goodness, decency, and trust. Third, because all of that has been established, therefore you can create what's known as *enlightened society*—by works of art, by basic sanity, and also by artists beginning to practice sitting meditation. Needless to say, we have to slip that in somewhere.

In the early days of the Western world, Great Eastern Sun artwork was happening constantly. Great Eastern Sun vision appeared not only in a lot of art, but in the lifestyle as well. Then people began to lose the sense of Great Eastern Sun vision, because their dignity was being questioned. Dignity was regarded as purely something to be cultivated, something belonging to the rich and above the heads of the peasants. The noble families had more food to eat than the peasants, and that kind of economic situation led to the Industrial Revolution. Then of course, the notion of democracy came along, saying that all men are equal. This meant that no hierarchy could take place.

Nowadays, on the whole I think that some modern artists are good and sane and have a tremendous sense of Great Eastern Sun vision, but they are extremely rare. There are only a few of them—very few. It is up to you to figure out who. Otherwise, we will be discriminating between good and bad, happy and sad. I think there is a definite trend of Great Eastern Sun vision; it is beginning to pick up. It did pick up in the sixties, though in the early seventies nothing happened at all. Everybody leaned toward setting-sun drama. But now people are beginning to come around and to pick up on it. During the twenties in America, a lot of interesting things began to happen. People didn't know what they were doing, but there were good feelings and real things took place: people actually knew how to conduct their lives and how to produce works of art. Unfortunately, art has now become an economic investment, which is a great obstacle to the artist. It doesn't leave us with very much to work on.

There is also a lot of setting-sun vision in the Japanese tradition. The flower-arranging school I came from is very much a setting-sun school, which I somewhat regret and respect at the same time. You see, the whole point is that we have to develop ourselves first, before we engage in anything else. We can't do very much other than that. We have to develop some understanding of Great Eastern Sun vision first, and then we can go out and study with teachers according to that particular principle. That seems to be the only way. We can't find any holy land of flower arrangers, or another art form we want to do. We have to find it within ourselves.

In developing Great Eastern Sun vision, I think we have to emphasize the Western tradition as well as the Eastern. In order to inspire American students, I've been working with them in all kinds of ways. I've been

telling them how to buy a good tie, a good suit, cuff links, shoes, how to say "Yes, sir" and "Please, may I?" I've been training them to behave as good human beings. And it's the same with art. We have to have some understanding of Buddhist Oriental composure, but at the same time we should also have the vision of the Western world, which in itself is quite remarkable. Tremendous things have happened here, but lately everybody has been trying to ignore that and make an amusement piece out of the whole tradition, to cut it down and make it all into a Coca-Cola world. When we do that, we run into problems. But as long as we don't give up our *Occidental vision and dignity, I don't think there's any* problem. And actually, there is such a thing as the Occidental Great Eastern Sun. That is a linguistic contradiction, like saying that the sun rises in the west, which is a silly thing to say. But the West is west, and therefore the sun also rises in the West, something like that. I myself have been inspired by great artists, painters, and musicians of the West. Therefore I'm here: I'm living in the Western world, and I appreciate my world tremendously.

Basic Goodness

Basic goodness is like a flower arrangement, which has its own contrast and its own togetherness. It is completely together, at the same time both inviting and fearless. There is no premeditation; it just comes along on the spot—basic goodness.

THE GREAT EASTERN SUN represents the notion of awake and also the notions of energy, luminosity, and brilliance. Basically, those qualities represent the fundamental state of mind an artist should have. He or she should have that kind of vision and that state of being; otherwise, there are a lot of problems and difficulties. At the beginning, Great Eastern Sun vision is very black and white. When the sun shines, it is white; when the sun doesn't shine, it is black. We have to cut through our ideas of indulging or lounging in the possibility that something might occur simply out of our experience. Obviously, there is room for open-mindedness in Great Eastern Sun vision, since it is basically a state of mind in which wakefulness, enlightenment, and open-mindedness are all involved. But in order to be open-minded, you have to open your eyes much wider, not just glance around, looking at things with half-closed eyes.

This is a very important issue: if you have a completely open mind and open eyes, you can discriminate further, and you can judge the situation accordingly. You are able to say yes to certain things and no to certain things. In fact, quite possibly you could open yourself further by presenting yourself and acting on the situation. In that way, as long as you know their dangers and their merits, even questionable subjects could be included. So it is very important for the artist to have that first mind, or artistic mind, which from the Great Eastern Sun point of view

is awake rather than half asleep. If you are awake and on the spot, then you can juggle things around. That is basic healthiness and openness.

Having seen the vision of the Great Eastern Sun from a fully awake point of view, we can begin to develop nonaggression. Usually, we are trying to take advantage of our world—to milk our world or to slaughter it. We have precisely the same attitude toward our world that we have toward cows. We take away their baby calves and milk the mothers to make butter and cheese—if they last long enough. And if they don't produce anything, or even if it only looks like they won't produce anything, we slaughter them and eat them up. That is an expression of aggression, which is the setting-sun version of how we view our world—and how we view our art as well. If a work of art is fun and productive, we go on; but if it is not, we give up on it and get into an entirely different subject. So nonaggression seems to be very important.

What makes us blind? Aggression makes us blind, so we can't create visual dharma. What makes us deaf? Aggression creates deafness, therefore, auditory dharma cannot be produced. And because of aggression, dharma touch, dharma smell, or dharma taste also cannot be produced. To use an American idiom, when we are uptight, we are being aggressive. We are so dissatisfied with ourselves, our world, and our work that we begin to feel that everything is worthless. Or at the least, we feel that some things are worthless, while other things might have some worth. We pay more attention and take things so personally that when any negativity occurs in our lives, we get aggressive and uptight. On the whole, we could say quite confidently that aggression makes us blind and deaf, so we cannot produce a work of art, let alone anything else. We cannot run our lives. Aggression makes us dumb mutes, so we become like vegetables. Aggression might produce a so-called extraordinary work of art, but art produced in such a way pollutes the world, rather than producing something refreshing and healthful.

The purpose of dharma art is to try to overcome aggression. According to the Buddhist vajrayana tradition, if your mind is preoccupied with aggression, you cannot function properly. On the other hand, if your mind is preoccupied with passion, there are possibilities. In fact, artistic talent is somewhat related to the level of passion, or heightened interest in the intriguing qualities of things. Inquisitiveness is precisely the opposite of aggression. You experience inquisitiveness when there's a sense of wanting to explore every corner and discover every possibility of the

situation. You are so intrigued by what you've experienced, what you've seen, and what you've heard that you begin to forget your aggression. At once, your mind is at ease, seduced into greater passion.

When you are in a passionate state, you begin to like the world, and you begin to be attracted to certain things—which is good. Obviously, such attraction also entails possessiveness and some sense of territoriality, which comes later. But straightforward, pure passion—without ice, without water, without soda—is good. It is drinkable; it is also food; you can live on it. It's quite marvelous that we have passion, that we are not made purely out of aggression. It's some kind of saving grace that we possess, which is fantastic. We should be thankful to the Great Eastern Sun vision. Without passion, nothing can be experienced; nothing can be worked on. With aggression, we have bad feelings about ourselves: either we feel tremendously righteous, that we are the only ones who are right, or we feel pissed off that somebody is destroying us. That is pathetic. It prevents us from seeing the basic goodness.

Basic goodness is like a flower arrangement, which has its own contrast and its own togetherness. It is completely together, at the same time both inviting and fearless. Such a flower arrangement is a product of basic goodness, if I may say so. It hangs together. There is no premeditation; it just comes along on the spot—basic goodness. For instance, I went up to the mountains today to collect some branches and this tree was there, just waiting to be collected. When I saw it I said, "Ah! That will do." We had to work on the tree a little bit in order to transport it, but that is also an expression of basic goodness, of how things hang together. Basic goodness combines the qualities of heaven, earth, and man: basic goodness of heaven, basic goodness of man, and basic goodness of earth are all involved at once. Basic goodness includes generosity and bravery. There is also a notion that all things are round. It is like the mandala principle, in that every single thing is working together with all the other elements, which is why the whole thing hangs together so well. And we begin to feel that way ourselves, that basic goodness exists in us. Therefore, we are not afraid of our world, and we are not depressed about our world. We feel so good.

We feel good about the particular artwork we are doing, and we begin to have further ideas. Some people try to squeeze ideas out as if they were constipated, sitting on a toilet seat, glancing occasionally at the toilet tissue, wishing something would come through. When artists

do that, the result is very meek and very technical. They always refer back to technicalities and try to produce something out of that—but they don't really feel good about the whole thing at all. What we are talking about here is the opposite of that. It is not exactly like developing diarrhea, but there is some kind of free flow, in which you have the confidence that you can actually produce ideas. You may not have any ideas at the beginning, but you might get some ideas halfway through. If you don't have any ideas halfway through, or you feel that you have run out of ideas altogether, then you take a short break, almost at the level of giving up. Then the Great Eastern Sun rises in your mind. That is not just an idea—it is something that actually occurs in your state of mind.

Basic goodness is connected with generosity and with a sense of trust in oneself. When that sense of trust comes through, we develop what is known as harmony. If there is no trust, there will be no harmony. It is all very well to say that everything is in harmony and that we should work with that; but that is just paying lip service, saying that something should be done, while nobody actually does it. It reminds me of certain religious conferences I have attended. The first one I experienced was a harmony conference, held in New Delhi while I was living in India. Then there were little harmony conferences that took place in California. They invited rabbis, bhikshus, priests, the whole gang. Everybody was talking about harmony, but they didn't find any harmony on the spot. Although they were talking about harmony, there were no results at all. Nothing at all happened, absolutely nothing! People came to the conference and left the conference the same way. But they went back saying, "We took part in a conference on harmony; therefore, our organization is greater now." But how could that be? That's very sad. It verges on setting sun, and it is not even sophisticated but primitive setting sun.

Harmony has to be related to some sense of lusciousness or richness. That is one aspect of harmony. The other aspect is a sense of spaciousness and openness. The lusciousness almost has the qualities of a Jewish mother: it is plentiful, rich, and there is lots of stuff on the table, so to speak. The openness and spaciousness are like a Japanese home, where things are very sparse. There is no big furniture, no Victorian stuffed sofa, just mats. When you sleep, you sleep with a block of wood or even a stone as a pillow. So true harmony is the Jewish home and the Japanese home put together quite conveniently. Technically, we could call that a

Shambhala home, or Great Eastern Sun home. And the same kind of harmony could be true of your artwork as well.

When such harmony takes place properly and fully, there is also joy—for the very reason that you are not struggling to create the harmony. In that way, you are also creating enlightened society, which can only exist with that sense of harmony and inquisitiveness and all the other things we've been discussing. It is our duty to create an enlightened society through works of art and through our sanity. And obviously, meditation practice is very important. So in the name of heaven, earth, and man, I bow down.

Meditation

Awareness is very important. We are here, nowhere else. Since we are here, why not be here?

According to Buddhism, art is something produced by a student rather than by an isolated person. You might think that sounds very stuffy; however, it is true. Art is produced by a student with an interest not only in his own creation, but in the basic necessity of expression—that is, what needs to be shown to others. Beyond that, the Buddhist approach to art is anti-garbage. You don't keep churning out scruffy things; they go into the garbage and are burned.

The basic Buddhist approach to art comes from a sense of studentship, which is also a sense of teachership, because even though teachers may be highly developed, they are still always students themselves. One of the reasons that art has never died is that successive teachers have continued to study works of art, rather than just proclaiming themselves as models. Usually what happens to those who proclaim themselves as models is that they lead decadent lives and become cynical and aggressive and indulge themselves unnecessarily.

Basically, when we talk about art, we are talking about a form of some kind that we could work on. So it is like the practice of meditation. But what is that form, and how does meditation go along with it? The obvious answer according to the Buddha is that form doesn't actually exist, and dharma also doesn't exist; therefore, form and dharma could mix together. It's like spreading cheese on bread: you can't distinguish between the cheese and the bread anymore. In order to do that, we need a lot of meditative discipline. Absolutely nobody can become a good craftsman or a good artist without relating with the practice of meditation.

By meditation I mean shamatha-vipashyana practice, not hunting peacefully in the jungle with your rifle or fishing peacefully, sitting beside the lake with your fishing rod. I'm talking about the sitting practice of meditation. Nobody can create a perfect work of art or understand a perfect work of art without understanding the practice of meditation. So the sitting practice of meditation is the basic ground.

But what do we mean by the sitting practice of meditation? For instance, Beethoven, El Greco, or my most favorite person in music, Mozart—I think they all sat. They actually sat in the sense that their minds became blank before they did what they were doing. Otherwise, they couldn't possibly do it. Just coming out of the market and plopping down at the dining-room table and writing a play—that's impossible. Some kind of mind-less-ness in the Buddhist sense has to take place.

From that basic ground, the sense of being, openness, or isness begins to develop. *Isness* might be a better word than *being,* because there *is* something happening. When you sit or you don't sit, when you cook your meal or wash your dishes, there's isness taking place. In the Buddhist tradition, that is called awareness. But we are not referring to the kind of awareness where we say, "I should be aware that I have to take my medicine at five o'clock, since I'm allergic to bugs." It's not that kind of awareness. The awareness referred to here is isness, which is very important and powerful. We have to understand that and work with it. That is absolutely important.

Isness is all-pervasive. Whatever we do, there is something happening. So there is no separation between the medium and you. For instance, if at this moment you are sitting on your buttocks on the floor underneath a tent—that is isness. We are here, we are actually here! That kind of awareness is very important. We are here, nowhere else. Since we *are* here, why not *be* here?

That sense of isness, beingness, or awareness is known as postmeditation practice. In sitting meditation, you don't trip out, but simply sit, identify with your breath, work with your thoughts. You do everything very manually, very definitely, constantly. But in postmeditation practice, you are here. You are definitely here: whether you are combing your hair, pressing your clothes, walking around, taking a bite of a peach, or whatever you are doing in your life. That is all an expression of isness.

In terms of art, if you do art, you just do it. You can see that this part

of the clay is wrongly put or this particular color is wrong, so you scrape it out or use another color. You go ahead and do it. There's no problem, and there's no challenge either. Nobody is trying to compete against anything. You are not trying to become the master of the world. You are just trying to be yourself and express yourself in a very, very simple, meditative, and nonaggressive Buddhist way. And as you meditate more and you work on your art more, the boundary between meditation and the practice of art, between openness and action, becomes fuzzy—which is what everybody experienced in the past.

The Buddhist way of approaching art is nonaggressive. Aggressiveness brings competitiveness, money concerns, comparison, frustration, excitement, all kinds of things. If there's no aggression, that brings joy, openness, dance. I don't mean joy in a sense of love-and-light, swimming in a sea of honey—but joy in the sense that things could be touched and appreciated. You could look at things that are beautiful, but there's no point in picking the flower. You can look at things, you can experience things, you can feel things, you can touch things, and that's fantastic. There is a real sense of real richness taking place from that perspective of nonaggression, nonpossessiveness. Some people go window-shopping in big cities, and all the time they are miserable because they can't afford to buy anything. Other people go window-shopping because they like to look at beautiful things. That seems to be the basic distinction.

Aggression is very deep-rooted. Anger is like the heart of the earth: it has brewed for years and years and years, thousands of years. And when it is just about to give a little peep out on the surface of the earth, that is aggression. Don't try to make it go away, and don't try to invite it—that is what's called the path. The path consists of collections of dirt, stones, grasses. It includes everything—passion, aggression, and ignorance. Without those, you have no path. So you shouldn't try to build a highway and have everything smooth under your car. That's the difference between the Buddhist path and the American materialistic path.

One kind of aggression happens because you have stuffed so much stuff into your head and you want to let it out, to make a display of it. Another kind of aggression is competitiveness, being achievement oriented. And yet another kind of aggression is that you are so involved with yourself that you forget the surface of the canvas or the medium that you are working with, so you lose the point. Also, in many cases, art is regarded as a release. That is absolutely the wrong attitude. A work

of art should not be regarded as a release! "I have nothing to do, I feel slightly depressed. Why don't I go to the pottery wheel and make some pots? That feels good." It is very sacrilegious to regard a work of art in that way. Art has to be very serious.

Art is unlimited. You can do anything. You can make a stick into a pair of chopsticks. You can do all kinds of things. You do not have to rely on a professional message coming through before you can do it—unless you are working with something complicated, like computers. At the same time, you should be open to an artistic way of viewing that could be very technical and very detailed in terms of symbols and space and so forth. That also comes from the sitting practice of meditation. Usually in art, your medium is based on something very simple and direct. Sometimes there's fear, sometimes obstacles, but you should just go ahead and do it. Buf if you expect your work is going to be great, the result will be that your work is terrible.

In looking at the role of sitting meditation practice in artistic perception, we should try to understand how the practice of meditation changes the way you relate with your world: how it changes your visual system, your hearing system, and your speaking as well. The way you look at somebody depends on your confidence and on how much you want to look at such a person. When you project your voice, it is quite clear to what degree you are willing to expose yourself. So I would like to make it quite clear that what we are talking about is not purely aesthetics. A lot of artists are trying to present something beautiful and nice, flowery, polite. But we are not trying to be overly polite or aesthetic—or, for that matter, overly rude. The idea is that the way we behave and the way we work with our sense perceptions comes from simple and straightforward Buddhism. You could call it buddha nature.

The important point, to begin with, is to have a blank sheet of paper in front of you. That is, you are willing to open, willing to let go. The Buddhist approach to art is not so much learning the tricks of the five buddha families, but having a sense of openness and perspective. Artistic talent and the concept of visual space is already available to you. You don't need to cultivate it, and you don't need to make up something without any context. It happens naturally and very simply. According to the tantric Buddhist approach, we don't relate with art purely as aesthetics, but we approach artistic talent and perception simply, as natural phenomena.

It's a question of paying more attention to the space that exists around us. In doing so, we develop a sense of confidence, confidence that space exists in front of our eyes and that it is not demanding anything. It's a free world, a truly free world. Obviously, in handling our life, questions and hesitations come up constantly. They are like the blank sheet of paper, the canvas. Out of those hesitations, we begin to make a move. We may begin to create a painting or a picture out of that. We are constantly creating and re-creating; each moment we are shifting from the previously created picture to creating the next picture. That has something to do with confidence. You have to be extremely sensitive and awake. That is the closest word I can think of: *awake*. Some kind of deliberateness is also necessary. But deliberateness does not mean trying to insert your personal ego; it is purely experiential and inspirational.

Generally, we are extremely keen on becoming artistic, but that is obviously a hang-up. Once we become "artistic," we have a tendency to organize, and to build up dogma around that, and to defend our territory. As soon as we begin to do that, we come up with all kinds of problems: problems of communication with ourselves and problems of communication with others.

Some artists appreciate eccentricity: "He or she is unapproachable, just a crazy artist. Period. That's all." If people try to approach such an artist, he won't speak to them. He only has a few carefully selected friends. He or she won't speak to anybody who does not buy into his particular trip, his particular ego. That kind of approach is well known, and since it amounts to what's known in spirituality as spiritual materialism, we could call it artistic materialism.

Eagerness can be a problem for an artist. When you are eager to do something, you don't perceive the blank sheet of paper or blank canvas in front of you at all. The whole picture is already painted and printed. So you have nothing to paint, nothing to go beyond, nothing further to create. Your vision is completely lopsided—nonexistent, for that matter. You might make something up out of necessity, out of some expectation that you or your friends might have. But the product will be junk. I think *dogshit* is the closest word for it.

Some people may be inspired by violent art, such as pictures of you exploding your head or your brain. But the only people who will be really interested are those with a militant outlook. Although such violent artwork might be presented in a fantastic Zen-like, peaceful fashion, it is

absolutely black. You are creating black magic, which harms people rather than helps them. So you should be very careful. Creating a work of art is not a harmless thing. It always is a powerful medium. Art is extraordinarily powerful and important. It challenges people's lives. So there are two choices: either you create black magic to turn people's heads, or you create some kind of basic sanity. Those are the two possibilities, so you should be very, very careful.

Art in Everyday Life

Awareness practice is not just sitting meditation or meditation-in-action alone. It is a unique training practice in how to behave as an inspired human being. That is what is meant by being an artist.

IN AWARENESS PRACTICE, called *vipashyana* in Sanskrit, there seems to be a need for a general sense of appreciation or artfulness. Awareness practice is highly psychological: it brings a lot of new material into our lives as well as utilizing the material we already have. We could say that an appreciation of mind brings an appreciation of everyday life. So we find that we are surrounded by all kinds of ways of experiencing and expressing our artistic talent, so to speak.

There is a difference between a mindfulness [Skt. shamatha] approach to art and an awareness [Skt. vipashyana] approach to art. In the case of mindfulness, there is a sense of duty and restriction; a demand is made on us to develop acute, precise mindfulness. Although the tension of being mindful may be very light—we are just touching the verge of the breathing process and there is a sense of freedom—nevertheless, it is still a demand we place on ourselves. In the case of awareness experience, there is simply appreciation. Nothing is hassling us or demanding anything from us. Instead, by means of awareness practice, we could simply tune in to the phenomenal world both inwardly and outwardly.

The idea of the artist is very important and seems to be necessary at this point. When we talk about art, we could be referring to somebody deliberately expressing the beauty and delightfulness or the mockery and crudeness of the world that we live in, in the form of poetry, pictures, or music. That kind of art could be said to be somewhat deliberate art. It is not so much for yourself, but it is more an exhibition, however

honest and genuine the artist may be. Such an artist may say that he simply composed his poem because he felt that way. But if that's the case, why should he write it down on a piece of paper and date it? If it's just purely for himself, it does not need to be recorded. Whenever a need for recording your work of art is involved, then there is a tendency toward awareness of oneself: "If I record that brilliant idea I've developed, in turn, quite possibly accidentally, somebody might happen to see it and think good of it." There's that little touch involved, however honest and genuine it may be.

A work of art from that point of view is exhibition. I'm not saying that is wrong—by no means. In fact, if we develop a moralistic approach toward art, the whole thing becomes heavy-handed. We try to save ourselves from ego-tripping and just show an inch or a corner of our work of art, afraid that if we do the whole thing completely, we might be indulging our ego and our pride, and so forth. In that approach, there's a lot of hesitation, a pulling back and forth involved. In exhibitionistic art, until you begin to realize that the discipline and training you have received is your possession and you can do what you like with it, until you have that sense of ownership, you will be regarded as halfhearted. That goes with any kind of artwork. The training and discipline you have received is completely inherent; you possess it completely and thoroughly, and it's now up to you how you present it. It's the same as the wisdom of the lineage, which is handed down to a particular lineage holder, and that lineage holder exercises his own authority as to how to present it to his particular generation.

In the practical art of brush-stroke paintings, you might assume the painters are free and they can do what they want. The paintings are just blobs of ink put together, and it seems to be coincidental that they make some sense. But those brush painters had long, painful training at the beginning, all of them, in a very orthodox style. In that conservative approach, once the training is completed, then you can do what you want. So even the work of a seemingly freestyle person has its root in that conservative interpretation. I think that the tradition of the East has always been of that nature. But in the West, particularly in the twentieth century, people don't always go through a thorough training process first. They purely use their talent, imitating the free style of trained people. And that's very chancy—sometimes they hit and make a tremendous success and sometimes they miss, and the whole thing becomes a

tremendous mess. So in order to develop a really freestyle work of art, you have to have the awkwardness of seeing yourself being awkward. That kind of watcher seems to be necessary, actually. We have no other choice. The only thing that makes things less serious is to have some kind of humor about the whole thing—not rebellious humor, but appreciating the games that are going on. And that creates further improvisation in brushing one's teeth, or whatever.

Generally, the Tibetan approach is very conservative. Also, the cultural attitude is that there is no secular art in Tibet. If you're going to paint even a freestyle thangka, the subject has to be a religious one: different gurus, different deities, or different protectors. So in Tibet you can't have too much of a free hand; whereas in the Zen tradition of China and Japan, often people depict secular art in the language of Zen. As far as social psychology is concerned, their pattern of thinking was much superior to the Tibetans. They didn't stick very faithfully to the doctrine, but they found a way of expressing the teachings in secular art, which seems to have different cultural implications.

The art of meditative experience might be called genuine art. Such art is not designed for exhibition or broadcast. Instead, it is a perpetually growing process in which we begin to appreciate our surroundings in life, whatever they may be—it doesn't necessarily have to be good, beautiful, and pleasurable at all. The definition of art, from this point of view, is to be able to see the uniqueness of everyday experience. Every moment we might be doing the same things—brushing our teeth every day, combing our hair every day, cooking our dinner every day. But that seeming repetitivenes becomes unique every day. A kind of intimacy takes place with the daily habits that you go through and the art involved in it. That's why it is called art in everyday life.

In this country there are many traditions and schools of thought in regard to awareness practice. Attempts are made to develop awareness through awareness of body, awareness of surroundings, and also through encounter groups of various kinds. Those could also be included as works of art. But there's a problem if we are unable to relate with and appreciate the insignificant details of our everyday life. Doing special body awareness practices devoid of everyday life—going to class and doing your thing and coming back—might seem extraordinarily fruitful and liberating; nevertheless, there's still a dichotomy in your life. You feel the importance and the seriousness of the artwork or awareness

practice in which you're involved, but, in fact, the more you feel that the whole thing is important and serious, the more your development of awareness is going to be destroyed. Real awareness cannot develop if you are trying to chop your experience into categories and put it into pigeonholes.

One of the things we should overcome in order to become a genuine artist is aggression. The attitude of aggression is one where everything's the same, so what's the difference? It brings with it an outlook on life that the whole world is involved in a plot against you and there's no point even attempting to make it workable. There's no point being involved in details. Everything is the same, so what? It's the attitude of a street fighter. That attitude of aggression is the seed of crudeness, as opposed to artistry. Such crudeness is extremely dumb and blind and misses most of the subtleties of life and its interesting points. If we begin to see even a part of that, the attitude of aggression deliberately shuts us down. That attitude of aggression brings with it the idea of the needlessness of being meticulous or of repetitive effort in trying to relate with things. If you are not able to see a particular situation clearly the first time, you might go back a second time and third time and fourth time—but aggression kills that potential of going back and developing the patience actually to experience it. So we could quite safely categorize aggression and impatience as anti-art, the source of crudeness.

In the awareness experience, you are able to see the shadow of your watcher by being patient. You do not want to get hold of just one chunk of mindfulness and stick with it, but you experience the mindfulness *and* its shadow, the environment around it. There is a tremendous appreciation of life and of how to conduct one's life. So awareness practice is not just formal sitting meditation or meditation-in-action alone. It is a unique training practice in how to behave as an inspired human being, or inspired sentient being. That is what is meant by being an artist.

While other artists take a deliberately artistic or exhibitionistic approach, with awareness practice your entire ability and all your potentials are completely opened. (I'm not using the term *exhibitionistic* pejoratively, but in a neutral way.) You don't need very much inspiration at all. Actually, you don't need that much vocabulary or tricks of any kind to create good works of art—poetry, painting, music, or whatever. You just simply say the experience you've experienced—just say it, just play it, just paint it. Once you've begun to break that kind of backwater,

there are gushes of all kinds of energies. And since the first attempt was free and clear and resourceful, then the second and third and fourth creations of art are no problem at all. It comes naturally, quite simply. However, if you are concerned, thinking, "Oh, I can't write poetry; I've never done it. I used to do it in school, but I was a rather bad one. I can't even draw a circle. I can't even sing"—that is simply hesitation. This has nothing to do with artistic talent. Professional, mechanical talent is not the obstacle—it is the psychological aggression that has to be worked on. When that psychological aggression is transmuted into the energy of artistic talent, you begin to realize that you can do all kinds of things—to your amazement.

There are a lot of implications of art in vipashyana experience, not only for painting and other artistic media, but also for relationships generally—how to communicate, how to speak, how to cook, how to choose one's clothes in a shop, how to select food at the supermarket—all those little details. Some people get extremely paranoid because they weren't brought up in cultured society, so to speak, and did not have any opportunities for learning how to go about such things. People become paranoid, aggressive, and "hufty-pufty" and come down on gentility as just being another trip: "I don't have to do that, I'm quite happy with my crudeness." But again, the aggression is the problem. It is not that you have to tune in to special information or a certain tradition, a particular style of eating, a particular style of dressing. This has nothing to do with a particular culture; rather, it has something to do with your instinct—that your instinct is open and has the room to exercise its potentialities into action. Then, for the very fact of being a genteel animal, human beings bring out their own man-animal-like, apelike, or genteel-ape tastes, whatever comes through.

Particularly in this country, the present conventional art is concentrated on the mere representation of sarcasm and crudeness, and it is ultimately unbearable, ugly, dirty—and thought provoking, no doubt. It seems that artists find it comfortable to produce that kind of art, because they are afraid to put a positive message out to the masses. Any positive messages they might have are a problem. The safest way of putting out some kind of artistic message is to do so from the angle of criticizing the existing flow of society, which is very safe. That might be said to be the same trick as Nagarjuna's logic, which is that one should not dwell on anything, one should not have any philosophy at all. If we don't have

any philosophy, we are safe, and we could criticize the nihilist and the eternalist and even those who dwell in the middle—and that's our philosophy. But somehow there's something not quite straightforward about that. After all, as Buddhists, we are followers of the Buddha, the Maharishi, the Great Rishi who followed the straightforward path. Likewise, in art, it seems to be necessary and important that we create a target of ourselves. We may become a target of criticism by presenting positive art, but that might be the best approach. It is the same thing in our daily life: not negating everything that happens in our lives, negation being a lifestyle, but getting into and presenting certain positive steps, like an appreciation of beauty. So art in the transcendental sense becomes the real practice of awareness, or vipashyana.

In the past we have talked about becoming good students of a tea maker, learning how to make a perfect cup of tea and how to entertain friends. From the ordinary way of looking, that seems to be just like parents' wishes that their children grow up and become society boys and society girls—that you entertain your friends ideally and occupy them and say the right things at the right moment, and everything runs smoothly. But in this case, it's much more than that. If you link that with the idea of awareness practice, then it is becoming a bodhisattva, which is the highest, most supreme society person that we could ever imagine. The bodhisattva is known as the great host, the ship, the bridge, the highway, the mountain, the earth—all of which deal with interactions with people. So there is a lot of potential in us. And that element could be applied at the beginning level of vipashyana practice as well; we don't have to start on such a big scale. Our energy and money and space and experience may be limited, but at least we can start on the practical level of developing an awareness of that potential.

We can start with the possibility of vipashyana experience, which is that everyday life is a work of art if you see it from a point of view of nonaggression. That point is extremely important, particularly in order to overcome clumsiness and crudeness, which in this case is not ordinary clumsiness and crudeness, but fundamental, phenomenological clumsiness and crudeness. Aggression is anti-art. If you are not in an aggressive state of mind, you feel you are rich and resourceful and infinitely inspired. When somebody is angry and uptight—even such ordinary, literal aggression as anger—then it cuts all possibilities of improvising what exists in your life as part of your artistic talent. It is not there anymore,

because if things potentially improvisable come up, you become angry at them and they become a nuisance. You would like to kick them out, destroy them. It is like an angry person who comes home and, not finding a way to express his anger, starts throwing chairs and hitting the table. That is a very unartistic thing to do and, to say the least, rather pathetic.

At the same time, anger and aggression are different. If you relate with your anger in such a way that it also inspires a work of poetry, there must be some generosity involved, or at least some kind of awareness. So art is not just creating beauty; it is anything workable and rich. And as far as art in everyday life and the awareness experience is concerned, transcending aggression is the root of all the artistic talent one can ever imagine.

Ordinary Truth

There is symbolism when you wake up, when you feel dirty and wish you could take a shower, when you take your shower and feel refreshed, when you feel hungry, when you eat your breakfast, bacon and eggs sunny-side up, toast and marmalade, quite possibly a waffle or pancakes, and when you are willing to face the day after a hearty breakfast and coffee. That is all symbolism.

PEOPLE'S USUAL IDEA of symbolism is that it is something outside them, like a signpost or billboard, that gives them signs, perhaps of religious significance. That's not quite true. Symbolism is connected with your self, your inner being. In other words, you are the biggest symbol of yourself. That is symbolism. Often you don't want to listen to yourself talking on tape, and if you see photographs that have been taken of you, you get embarrassed. You think they could be better, and you don't want to see what you look like from somebody else's point of view. But maybe you should look into that more. You are a caricature of yourself and a symbol of yourself. Everything is its own caricature, by itself. That is symbolism on its own, the symbolism of experience itself. For instance, when you create a visual symbol, first it presents itself. Ideas come afterward. That's the whole point. If you do interior decoration in a room, it speaks for itself. Later, people may get conceptual or metaphysical feelings about it. So everything stands by itself, and as far as you are concerned, you are a symbol of yourself. Symbolism is based on what we experience personally and directly in our lives: pain, pleasure, or whatever. From that point of view, symbolism is a state of mind.

First of all, before we know anything about anything, we have problems with motivation. If we view the whole world as raw material, like a simple sheet of canvas, a simple piece of wood, or a simple piece of

clay, what is its relationship with ourselves? That piece of canvas or clay, being an inanimate object, has no particular personal interest or desire to form itself into a painting or a sculpture. But as human beings, we *do* have ideas about how our life should be, how our understanding should take place. So we are caught in a double bind: we want to understand, but we would also like to reshape the universe according to our own expectations.

There are two basic understandings of symbolism: the theistic and the nontheistic. Theistic symbolism is a constant self-existing confirmation; that is, whenever symbolism exists, you exist and your world exists. In the case of a nontheistic symbolism such as Buddhism, you don't exist, symbolism doesn't exist, and the universe doesn't exist. That's quite shocking! "How do we go beyond that?" you might ask. But we don't actually go beyond that. Instead of trying to go beyond it, we try to get into it.

The basic notion of nontheistic symbolism is that whatever exists in our life—our birth, our death, our sickness, our marriage, our business adventure, our educational adventure—is based on symbolism of some kind. This type of symbolism may not be the vivid visions you see by tuning your system in to a mystical state of mind, such as fantastic auras with symbols in the middle. In fact, from the point of view of nontheism, such perceptions are regarded as bullshit. Maybe you need more rest or another cup of coffee. We do not go along with any kind of highfalutin colorful adventures, cosmic explosions of color after color, or fantastic visions. Looking for magical messages, as opposed to a direct relationship, creates a barrier to understanding symbolism.

In the nontheistic discipline of Buddhism, we do not glorify *that* because we want to confirm *this*. Instead, we simply go along. We are not denying God, but we are simply trying to approach reality as simply as we could. A tortoise walks and carries a heavy shell; a cow walks along and grazes by itself in a green meadow, depositing its dung; pigeons make their own noises and live on the roof. Things have their own place. They don't have to be commanded by the higher or the greater, particularly. Things are as they are, ordinary and simple. Seemingly, that is a very simple-minded approach, but actually it is extremely deep.

Symbolism usually comes as messages. It is a very simple eye-level relationship: me and my world. You could forget the sky, or the It, Him, or Her. That makes the whole thing extremely simple: there's no Big

Brother watching you. Symbols of all kinds occur throughout our life, and whether you believe it or not, the most penetrating and powerful symbol in our life is pain. Therefore, the symbolism of suffering is very important and realistic. Complaints occur *right here*—not up there or down below, but in the middle, where we are living, where we are actually experiencing our life on this particular earth. We are not underground, and we are not up in the air—even though people get fascinated that Tibetans can levitate. In fact, there was one eccentric old gentleman in England who wrote me and said that he wanted to start a laboratory of Tibetans levitating behind glass, but his plan didn't come off.

Basic suffering is very powerful ground, and the basis of man's attitude toward symbolism. The only immediate symbolism we can experience is pain. It is the direct message that we have been constantly involved in seeking pleasure of all kinds—and when the search for pleasure becomes our theme, that automatically provides a reference point to pain. We may feel relatively good, with nothing to complain about, particularly. But then we would like to entertain ourselves more. We go to the movies, but the movie is terrible, so we decide to go to a restaurant, but the food isn't so good—or, for that matter, we go and see a great movie and have a fantastic meal in a restaurant! *All of that* is an expression of basic pain.

The existence in our mind of basic pain is extremely powerful and difficult to shake off. Basically, we feel captured by our life. We can't get out of it; we are stuck with it. We don't want to get into it—maybe it is too much for us. So we are stuck in the middle of it all the time. We may try to blame our pain on the past, but what we are experiencing is in the present, here and now. Even if our pain did develop in the past, it is impossible to change that. We are stuck with our regular thinking, our regular world as it is. We have to take what we are given. It's our world, whether we like it or not. As they say, "America—love it or leave it." That's great symbolism. The American flag: you can't take it, you can't leave it, it's always there.

Pain takes place all the time, and pleasure takes place all the time. The problem is that we really don't want to relate with the actuality of things as they are. We don't want to relate with that kind of symbolism, but it is always there. You have to share the meaning of symbolism personally, the pain and pleasure aspect of symbolism, definitely so. Otherwise, we cannot discuss the meaning of symbolism; we have nothing to

talk about. That basic symbolism of pain and its hang-ups pervades our entire life. There is symbolism when you wake up, when you feel dirty and wish you could take a shower, when you take your shower and feel refreshed, when you feel hungry, when you eat your breakfast, bacon and eggs sunny-side up, toast and marmalade, quite possibly a waffle or pancakes, and when you are willing to face the world after a hearty breakfast and coffee. That is all symbolism. The idea of coffee, and in fact the word *coffee,* is very provocative. It is mantra. *Pancakes, eggs, bacon.* That is all extremely powerful, very poetic, although we don't want to get into any trip about being a poet. Everything that goes on in our life is related with some kind of symbolism.

Our simple daily life could be involved with that kind of statement all the time, but we reject it as a purely mundane thing. We regard it as a terrible hassle and forget the whole thing. We drink our coffee and eat our bacon and eggs, just to get it over with. Then we go to the meditation hall and sit on a cushion and think maybe that will be a big thing for us. Somehow symbolism doesn't work that way. The basic point of tantra is interest and awareness in every activity we are involved in throughout our life, at every moment.

There is always some kind of message taking place. What message? We don't know. It's up to you. There's not going to be a fantastic dictionary or encyclopedia. This is simply a reminder that every activity you are doing—smoking cigarettes, chewing gum—has some kind of meaning behind it. The simple point is that the things you do shouldn't be missed. You should experience what you do. (But don't be heavy-handed, as if you were going to write a book about it. I don't want to make this into a trip.)

At every moment, our every move usually has a thought-provoking quality. The universe is constantly trying to reach us to say something or teach something, but we are rejecting it all the time. In categorizing your experience as mundane and sacred, good and bad, significant and insignificant, you are rejecting symbolism, right and left, all the time. You are rejecting the whole thing. By fitting everything into categories and pigeonholes, you have nothing left in your life except your own pain. But this pain is not really productive pain, like the original basic pain we were talking about. Instead, you just rot yourself into a grain of sand. That is not really very romantic. It's a terrible thing. Finally it is as if your ingrown toenail becomes monstrous and eats you up, not only

your toe but your whole body and your expansive, energetic vision. Everything is disheveled.

The basic point is that we have very many possibilities of symbolism: every activity taking place is basic symbolism. I would like you actually to appreciate the world around you and begin to understand the facts and figures, the basic realities. There are a lot of things taking place. Symbolism doesn't have to be poetic or spiritual or mystical; it is the ordinary truth that takes place in everyday life. Buddhist symbolism is both unique in its nontheistic approach and very ordinary. Altogether, it is simply our living situation—life and experience, life and experience—very simple and direct.

Empty Gap of Mind

In order to realize unconditional symbolism, we have to appreciate the empty gap of our state of mind and how we begin to project ourselves into that non-reference point.

UNLESS WE HAVE SOME basic understanding of the foundations of Buddhist psychology, we have no way of understanding symbolism at all. So we are preparing our ground with integrity and at a slow pace. We do not want to present tantric symbolism California-style. Instead, we will go slowly, step by step.

Symbolism has to do with phenomenal experience, the various realms of phenomena that can be experienced through the five sense perceptions, particularly the very powerful auditory and visual perceptions. Phenomena as traditionally known are inspired purely by the five sense perceptions. We also try to piece phenomena together, to record and edit them in our mind, which in Buddhism is considered a sixth sense. For instance, if as a child we were slapped by a parent, that particular phenomenon is recorded in our mind; so the next time we are tempted to do the same thing, it is quite clear what will happen to us—we will be slapped again. That's sort of an adolescent phenomenal experience in which a reference point, or relationship, takes place. There seem to be further phenomena as we grow up and go to school, and we are told all sorts of facts and figures and stories. We begin to build our phenomenal experience further, into possibilities of all kinds: how we relate with other children, exchange information back and forth, watch Sesame Street, or whatever it may be. In all these details, phenomenal experience is shared.

As we grow further, we begin to relate with philosophy and spirituality,

whatever our particular approach may be. Our phenomenal experience becomes much more complicated, not that childhood phenomenal experience is all that simple. Some underlying unsaid communication takes place all the time, and the phenomenal world becomes extremely complicated and tiresome sometimes. Other times, we simply can't live without it. We have to have phenomenal experiences of all kinds. If we don't have enough ordinary phenomenal experiences, we go out and buy newspapers, watch television, go to the movies, or even take trips to foreign countries to see how other people live, which are superphenomena.

At the beginning, as we are growing up, the phenomenal world is simply based on survival and our need to communicate with our living situation. In order to ask our mother to cook an egg, soup, or cereal, we have to have some symbolism in mind: we think *soup, egg,* or *cereal.* At first we don't actually say it properly, but we think it. We visualize it fully and completely. Then we utter the word *egg, soup,* or *cereal.* When we vomit out those words, our parents are very proud of us, because we are beginning to talk and to communicate. Perceiving symbolism—relating with any kind of symbolism in the world—is based on that growth of phenomenal experience. It projects outward personally at all levels: at the grownup, old-age, youngster, teenager, and infant levels, such phenomenal experiences take place constantly. We could classify those phenomenal experiences as symbolism, definitely, but it is relative symbolism rather than absolute symbolism.

It is important to realize that those little phenomenal experiences are produced by restlessness, by searching for further entertainment, by looking into and investigating our world. What is the world made out of? What is the world, anyway? We ask all kinds of questions of our parents, professors, friends, elders, uncles, aunts, psychiatrists. We are trying to sort out what this world is. We want so badly to find out what it is all about. Some people think they have some kind of clue, possibilities of that and this. But we are still depending on the possibility of finding *the answer,* and in that sense, we are all babies. This has nothing to do with chronological age. We simply do not have enough experience of symbolism or the realization of what symbolism means, so whether we are old or young, we are still like infants. That seems to be a problem—or maybe a promise.

In order to understand absolute symbolism, we first have to get squared with the relative phenomenal world, or relative symbolism. So

try to understand this point. At this moment, how we view our world personally is not very difficult; but at the same time, it is extraordinarily difficult and complicated. We would like to have access to our particular world at this very moment, as though it were a gigantic baby bottle and we could take a sip. We want to be fed all the time, to suck rather than just sit. That is a crude way of putting it, but it is not meant to undermine your individual dignity. I respect your dignity and splendor, but let's face it—everybody wants to be a big baby. Some of us are bold and hungry enough that we would like the whole bottle in our mouth, with a huge nipple. Some people are more polite and don't want a big bottle, which would make them very self-conscious, so they have a little thin tube. Apart from political and social concerns, the whole thing boils down to the fact that we are big babies, quite lovable ones.

When you begin to understand relative symbolism, you realize that relative symbolism is like a nipple. You are fed constantly. If you are restless or uptight, you can suck violently; if you are angry, you could bite it. We are stuck with that big nipple, big bank of comfort, all the time. It is smothering. Relative symbolism is based on passion, which also means restlessness, demandingness, and aggression. We are fed with spiritual fluid, or temporary domestic fluid, in connection with our perceptions of the world and how we feel. And since the definition of dharma, according to the Buddhist tradition, is passionlessness, relative symbolism is not real dharma.

At this point, I would like to shift our attitude from being big babies and discuss absolute symbolism. I hope you are up to it. Absolute symbolism is not a dream world at all, but realistic. As far as linguistics is concerned, *absolute* means "needing no reference point." Otherwise, absolute would become relative, because it would have a relationship with something else. So absolute is free from reference point. It is wholesome, complete by itself, self-existing.

The idea of absolute symbolism is also passionless and egoless. How come? Actually, as far as absolute is concerned, you don't come but you go. It is a going process rather than a coming process, not a collector's mentality, in which you store everything in your big bank with fat money behind it, or your big bottle. Absolute symbolism is egoless, because you have already abandoned your psychological reference point. That doesn't mean you have abandoned your parents, or your body, or anything of that nature. So what is that reference point? It is a sense of

reassurance that makes you feel better. It's like when you are crying and your friends come along and hold you and say, "Don't cry, everything's going to be okay. There's nothing to worry about. We'll take care of you. Take a sip of milk. Let's take a walk in the woods, have a drink together." That type of psychological reference point is based on the idea of relative truth.

The absolute truth of egolessness does not need any of those comforts. But that is actually a very dangerous thing to mention at this point. I have my reservations as to whether I should talk about these things, and since I have lost my boss, I have no one to talk to. So I decided to go ahead and tell you. A sense of empty-heartedness takes place when we lose our reference point. If you do not have any reference point at all, you have nothing to work with, nothing to compare with, nothing to fight, nothing to try to subtract or add into your system at all. You find yourself absolutely nowhere, just empty heart, big hole in your brain. Your nervous system doesn't connect with anything, and there's no logic particularly, just empty heart. That empty-heartedness could be regarded in some circles as an attack of the evil ones and in other circles as an experience of satori, or sudden enlightenment.

People actually have no idea what non-reference-point experience is. When you begin to abandon all possibilities of any kind of reference point that would comfort you, tell you to do something, help you to see through everything, make you a better and greater person—when you lose all those reference points, including your ambition, the strangest thing takes place. Usually people think that if you lose everything—your ambition, your self-centeredness, your integrity and dignities—you will become a vegetable, a jellyfish. But it's not so. You don't become a jellyfish. Instead, you are suspended in space, in a big hole of some kind. It is quite titillating. Big hole of suspension! It's as if you were suspended in outer space without a space suit or rocket ship. You are just floating and circulating around the planets forever and ever.

That sense of suspension is the ground, according to the non-reference-point view of how to perceive absolute symbolism. That experience of suspension is the canvas or the blackboard where you paint your pictures, your symbolism. It is the basic ground. You can only begin from there. It is the empty stage you can perform on. I'm not saying that you flip into that state of mind, and you are stuck with that particular experience for the rest of your life, necessarily. But we do have such a state of

mind; such an experience occurs all the time. Throughout our life there are occasional experiences of this black hole, suspended space, where we have no reference point. No matter how much we kick, how hard we try to push, how hard we breathe, we don't get anywhere. We're just suspended in a vacuum. Such an experience takes place with everybody, all the time. But nobody has realized that from that experience you can cultivate your potential artistic talent, your dharma art visual appreciation, and begin to experience symbolism altogether. That idea has occurred to very few people. It has only occurred to our grandparents, the holders of the lineage, the people who made the symbols and experienced the symbols personally. They actually executed them, so this is not so much doctrine as the personal experience of our grandparents and great-great-grandparents, who experienced that black hole frequently. Out of that black hole of egolessness and no-discursive-thought, a color occurred, a symbol occurred, or a fraction of a symbol occurred.

Traditionally speaking, a symbol occurs because a symbol is unborn, unceasing, and its nature is like the sky, like space. Those are the three principles of absolute symbolism. *Unborn* means that symbolism cannot happen if there is no place to give birth to symbolism. Space can give birth to symbolism, because symbolism did not exist and does not exist. Because of its nonexistence, there is immense energy and power to create an image of nonexistence. So images of immense power and immense clarity, sharp-edged and crystal clear, take place. *Unceasing* means that symbolism cannot die once it has been given birth to within the level of nonexistence. Symbolism cannot die; it remains in the hearts of all human beings—all sentient beings, in fact. Symbolism is everlasting, but nobody has to nurture it, nurse it, or hold on to it. Third, since its nature is like the sky, like space, people can execute such symbolism from their own experience, their own perception. So giving birth to absolute symbolism requires no-mind, which is big mind, great mind. This may sound like complete gibberish, but it makes a lot of sense. The idea of nonexistence also being highly existent, eternally existing, is very tricky. It is a very powerful statement.

In that projection into space, there are no materials, no constituents out of which to make your symbols. For instance, you might be watching a dead dog, and that whole perception is an experience of nothing happening. We are not talking about the psychological functioning of a holy man, an enlightened person, or a buddha. We are talking about our

own perceptions: we can experience this too, it's right here, we could do it. When you experience a dead dog bleeding, its teeth showing and somewhat dirty, its fur covered with dust, and its innards slowly coming out, skin torn, and blood running onto the ground—if you look at it from a conceptual point of view, it's a terrible idea. It's not artistic to talk about such a terrible subject. I am certain we shouldn't talk about such things; we are too genteel to talk about such dirty things. You mustn't even mention death or blood; you only do that when you swear. However, it is blank mind that projects the vision of a dead dog lying on the ground. It may be revolting, and sometimes interestingly colorful, expecting possibilities of the future. Nevertheless, behind that whole thing there is a space of nothing actually happening, because you are so shocked.

We can look at a beautiful rose with its gentle petals, velvetlike, but not as rough as velvet. It is so delicate and beautiful, like an infant's tongue. It is fantastically fresh and beautiful and sends out its fragrance. We could see little tears sitting all over it, the dew of the morning slowly melting and finally becoming an adornment of that particular rose flower. An occasional breeze sways it back and forth and gives it a sense of being alive. A beautiful rose flower. You are so fascinated, so appreciative of that particular image. In looking at that rose, there is exactly the same perspective of empty mind that takes place in watching the dead dog.

Although I'm sure you don't really want to associate those two things—one is horrible and one is so beautiful—you are still doing the same thing all the time. If you watch a beautiful rose or if you watch a dead dog bleeding with its innards out, the same experience of blankness takes place. That is where symbolism actually begins to occur in your state of mind. When you first perceive something, there is a shock of no conceptual mind operating at all. Then something begins to occur. You begin to perceive: whether you like it or not, you begin to see colors and perceptions, to open your eyes. So that non-reference-point mind can become highly powerful and extraordinarily sensitive.

That is an interesting point of view, and it can be conducted in ordinary human situations. For instance, my own students like to find out where things are going wrong. They have lots of complaints—very intelligent complaints, not just ordinary complaints. Because of that, their intelligence begins to heighten, so that their complaints do not become

real complaints but an expression of clarity, or clear-mindedness. So we are not talking about the perceptions of the Buddha, the arhats, the bodhisattvas, or the great tantric masters. We are talking about the principles of perception. In order to realize unconditional symbolism, we have to appreciate the empty gap of our state of mind and how we begin to project ourselves into that non–reference point.

Coloring Our World

If we are to be able to perceive symbolism, we have to abandon this *so that we become completely with* that*—the events of life, the expressions of life, the colorful play of life. That seems to be the basic point.*

IN OUR LIVES, there is a lot of symbolism, or reminders, so to speak. Sometimes we miss them, and sometimes we experience them. And when we experience them, sometimes we experience them incorrectly and sometimes correctly. It seems to depend on the dogma of the situation, which leads us to the topic of obstacles to realizing symbolism.

An important obstacle to experiencing symbolism is expectations. We have been brought up with all kinds of reference points and frameworks of ideas, which we use to try to recapture the crucial experiences that highlight our lives. For instance, we would like to recapture our lover by identifying our lover with some symbol, concept, or connotation. And we would like to relate with our parents, our sisters and brothers, and our friends in this same way. In a constant attempt to make our lives worthwhile, we try to make each thing that comes up into a highlight, the best possible situation. It could be the time we spent in the hospital, the time somebody told us about some person, the time we had with our teacher in school, whatever. We make these things into very interesting highlights—but in doing so we are missing the point of symbolism.

We experience some shift or breakthrough in our minds in *every* situation, whether it is an experience induced by psychedelic drugs or a natural experience such as a personal dilemma, personal revelation, or personal tragedy. Then we turn *some* of these experiences into highlights. And often, one particular highlight becomes a crucial password in our lives, a turning point. "The first time I had that experience I felt fantastic!

It struck me like a bolt from the blue!" But whether an experience is ordinary or extraordinary, *every* experience is regarded as a message. It is not like a telegram from Western Union, announcing that somebody died or got married; it is a message of the natural situation. Since it is a natural message, therefore we decided to call it symbolism.

In relating to natural symbolism, the fault arises from your sense of personal expectations. You would like to see yourself playing a certain role in society—or within yourself, for that matter. You would like to be such-and-such a person, playing such-and-such a role. Of course, you could easily say that you do not have any expectations. But the desire not to have expectations only becomes another form of expectation. In fact, that is a great expectation, because you begin to feel that not having expectations is the best way to attain your expectations. So expectations are a stumbling block. We color and reedit our experiences drastically. How do we do that? We do it with our passion, aggression, and ignorance.

Passion colors our expectations with desire. We see whatever is connected to us in terms of warmth, friendliness, and congeniality. We are constantly trying to mold our expectations in terms of what we want. The rest of what we hear is completely inaudible; the rest of what we see is completely invisible. We only take in what we want to see and hear. Expectations also take the form of aggression, or rejecting. Whatever we see or hear is constantly subject to our rejection. We would like to push away anything presented to us as either logically or personally inapplicable. We reject all those facts and figures, so we can't hear and we can't see. Another form of expectation is known as ignorance, according to traditional Buddhist language. Here this is a sense of basic panic, basic bewilderment, basic pain. We are completely numbed by the situation, so we can't hear or see. We can't even reject or accept. Instead, whenever a situation does not suit our requirements, we automatically create a mental block to shut it off. We are confused and terrified by all those uncertainties.

These three types of experience—passion, aggression, and ignorance—occur in our minds because behind all that there is a governing factor, which is our belief in "I," "me." "Me" or "I" is not very visionary: it's very personal, very domestic, and very petty. "I" would like to do certain things. "I" would like to experience certain things. Whenever that word *I* flashes in our mind, our experience is that we are willing to

employ any one of those three convenient tactics: passion, aggression, or ignorance. We are willing to employ any of those possible tactics so that "I" can be preserved. In that way, "I" cannot be challenged; "I" cannot be manipulated by such undesirable situations as the nonexistence of "I" or the possibility of giving up territory altogether. That is the general problem that takes place. Whenever there is the word "I," "me," or "I am," there is a sense of thisness, which is extremely strong. Therefore, our sense of thatness has to be conditioned by whatever is experienced by *this*. So we begin to have problems with *that*. We try to reject it, which is an expression of aggression; we try to magnetize it or suck it in, which is an expression of passion; or we ignore the whole thing, which is an expression of ignorance. Since expectations relate with passion, aggression, and ignorance, if you could see through their particular games, then the expectations themselves would be transparent. It's a question of clarity, as well as self-confidence.

The experience of I, me, a personal existence, ego, self, whatever you want to call it, has a sense of immense fundamental pain. You don't want to exist, you don't want to be, but you can't help it. Children often complain to their parents: "Why did you bring me into this world! What am I doing here! Who am I?" There is a lot of resentment toward existence; self-existence is a painful point. Sometimes mystical traditions talk about a fantastic rediscovery of self, rediscovering who I am. But if you look at that as purely rediscovering your identity, that mystical experience becomes another push to play spiritual games, I'm afraid.

The fundamental effect of ego and its tricks is becoming hardened. It actually prevents the sensitivity of experiencing the total, complete reality of symbolism. Of course, from the realm of ego, you can manufacture your own little symbolism, your own little messages. But that's just adding to your confusion, rather than seeing absolute symbolism. If we are to be able to perceive symbolism, we have to abandon *this* so that we become completely with *that*—the events of life, the expressions of life, the colorful play of life. That seems to be the basic point.

The source of sophistication that allows us to be able to see messages coming here and there, ordinary symbolism, is some kind of gap—*that* which is free of *this*. Without that, we are unable to experience anything of that nature; everything is "me" all over the place; "I am" all over the place. Whatever you experience is only "me" talking back to you. From that perspective, everything's okay: you could kill somebody, destroy

somebody, and actually confuse the whole world as much as you yourself are confused. That is a journey toward making cosmic garbage, rather than cosmic vision. But our intention is not to create further garbage.

Basically, the main obstacle to the perception of symbolism is our ego. We are allergic to ourselves; therefore, we create all kinds of sicknesses and pains. And even when we take our medicine, unless the doctor is completely wise and understanding, the medicine doesn't have any effect on us, because we are allergic to ourselves. People may ask if you are allergic to penicillin or aspirin, but nobody asks, "Are you allergic to yourself?" Nobody's thought of that. If you do not have clear vision or clear perception, it is because you are allergic to yourself. So before you take any medicine to clear up your vision and be able to perceive symbolism, you'd better check on how allergic you are to yourself. You might think about that question for a while. Then you will begin to see what the problem is in experiencing direct communication from what exists in the world. You will begin to see why certain messages don't click and other messages do click; certain things work and certain things don't work.

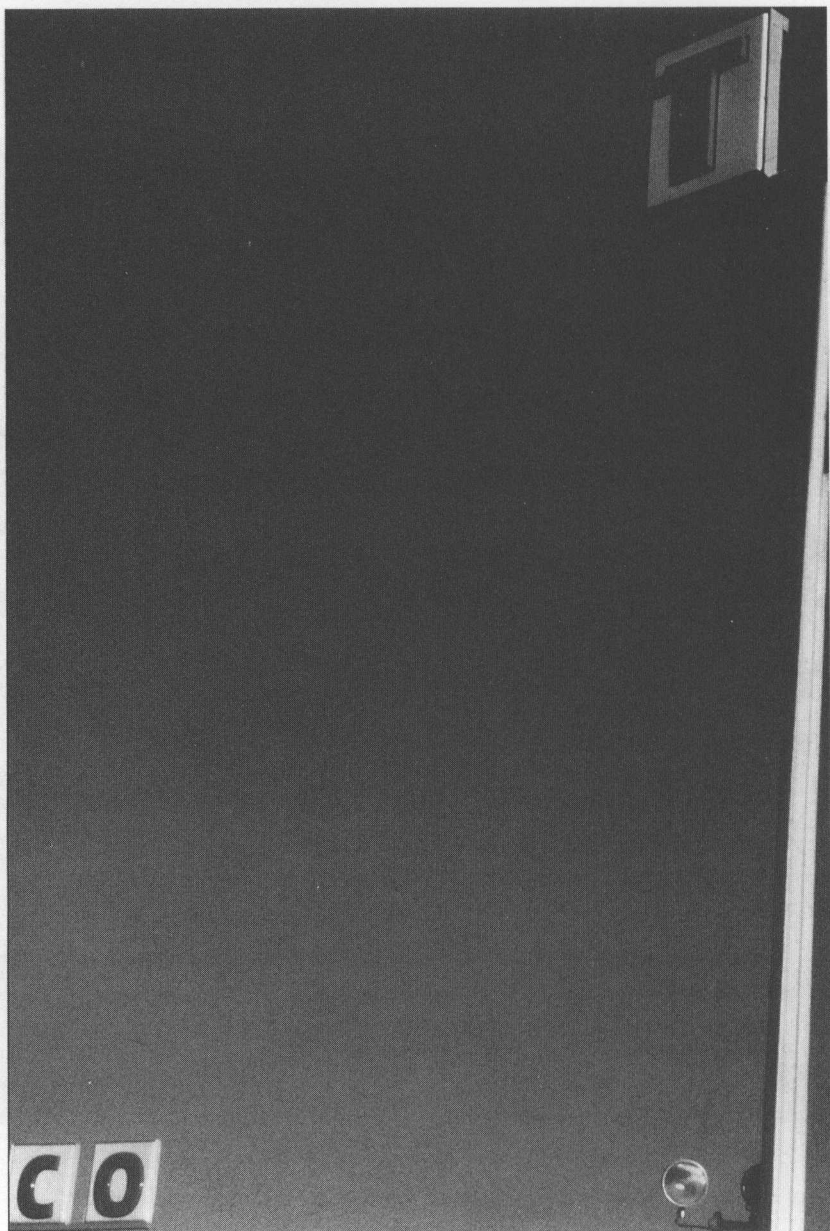


Vajradhara. A traditional thangka painting by Sherab Palden.
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



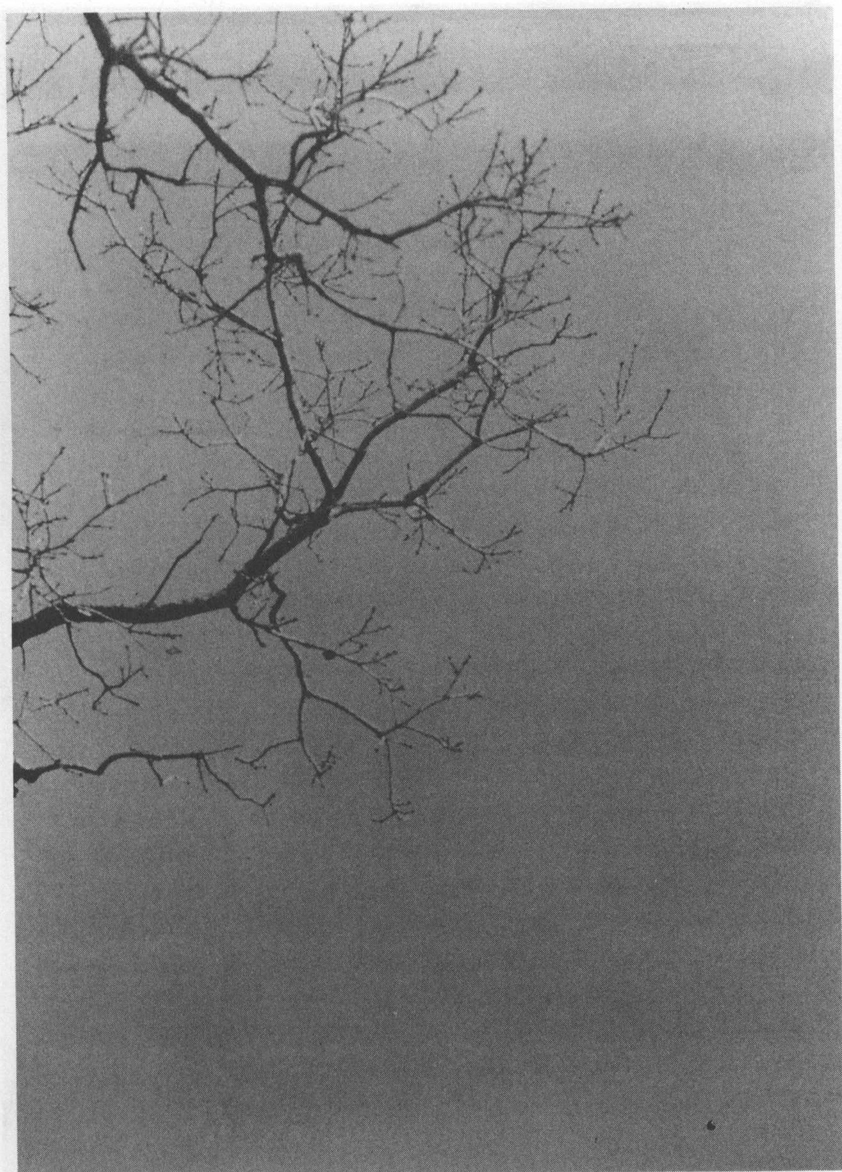
Reeds.

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1972. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Texaco sign.

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1972–1975. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



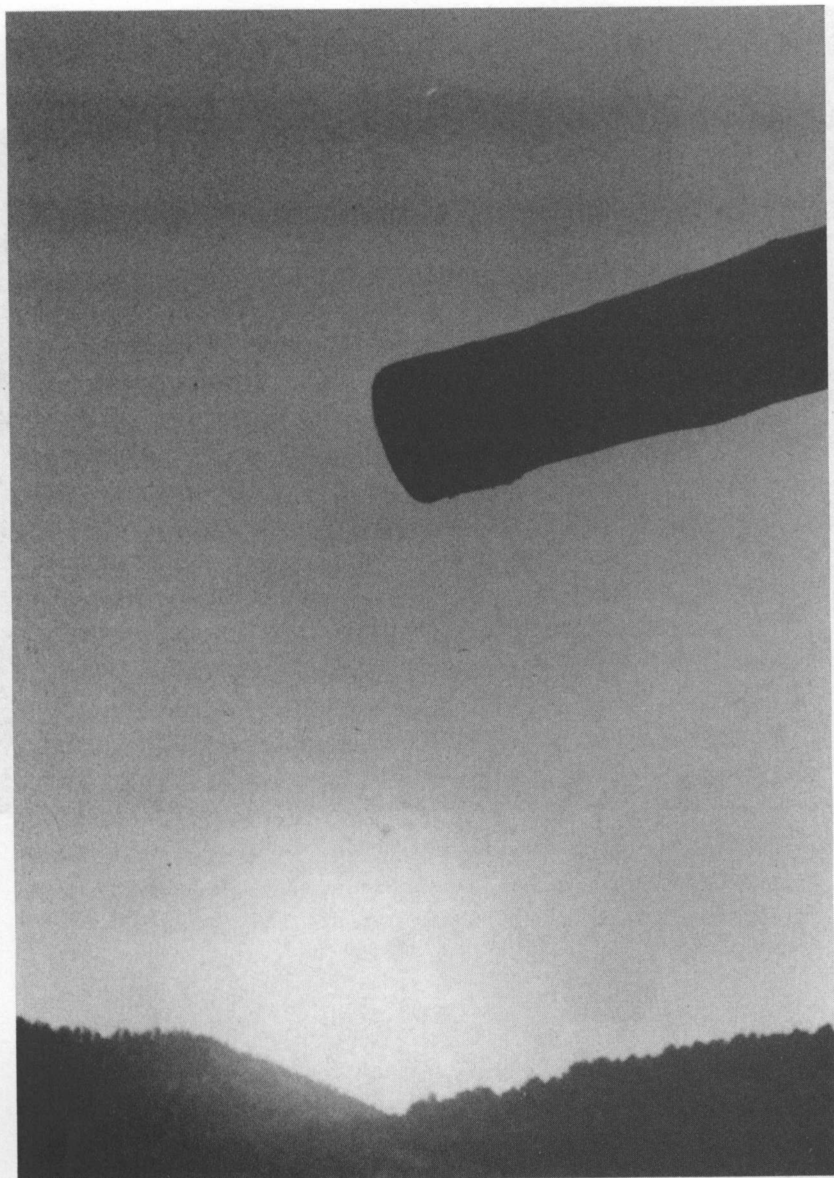
Branches. "We could view the trees as cracks in the sky, like cracks in glasses. We could adopt that change in perspective. The space that exists around you could be solid—and you could be only a hollow in the middle of that solid space."

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1974. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



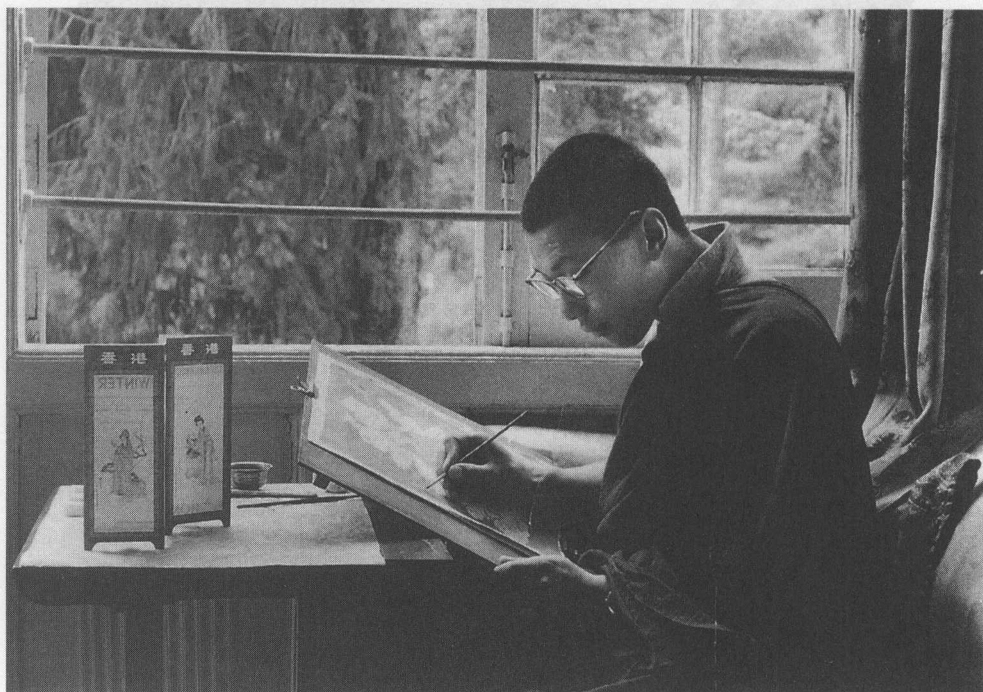
Wire.

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1974. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Beam. "People keep taking photographs of sunsets, so I thought I might take a photograph of a moment. It is a sort of vajra shot, the precision of it."

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1974. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Vidyadhara painting a Guru Rinpoche thangka, Dalhousie, India, 1963.

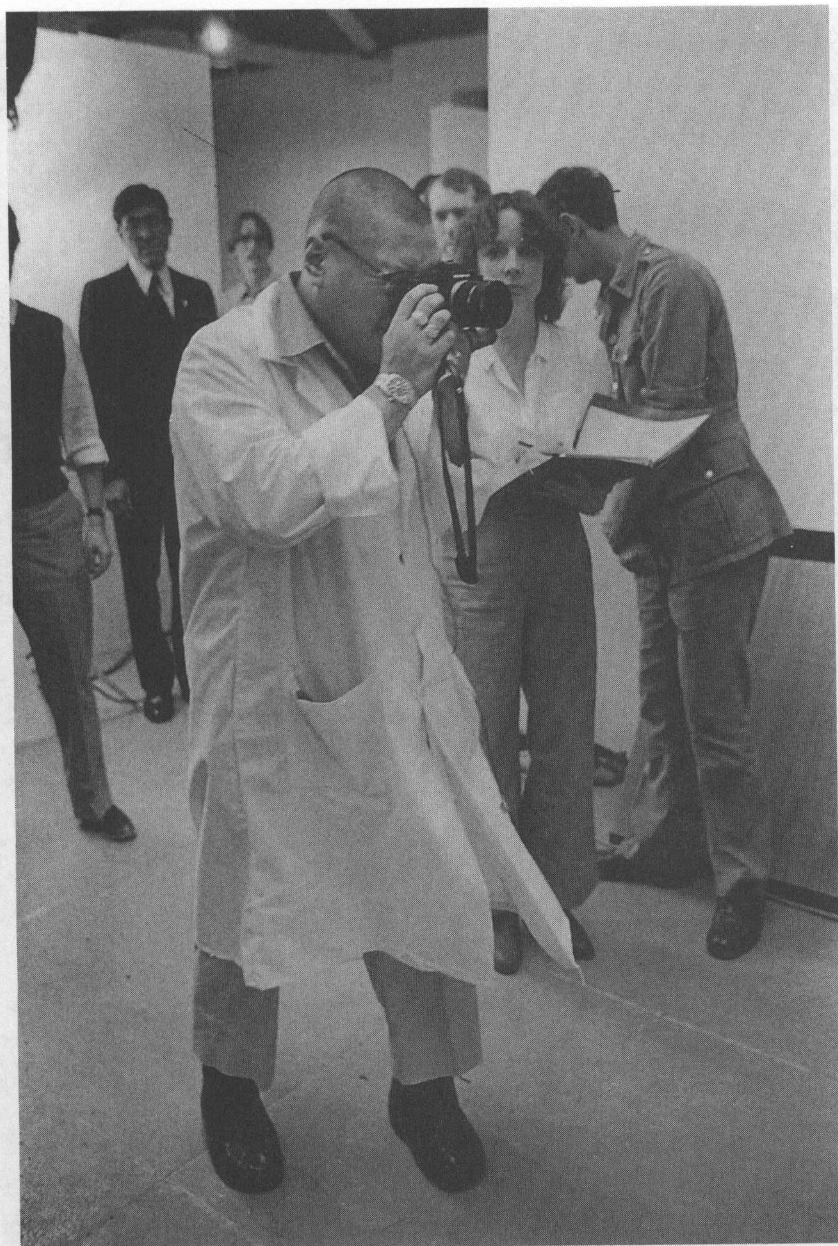
PHOTO BY DR. ELISABETH FINCKH, 1963. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Spontaneous calligraphy on overhead projector. Los Angeles Dharma Art Seminar.
PHOTO BY ANDREA ROTH, 1980. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



"Explorers of the Richness of the Phenomenal World" in the Los Angeles Arboretum.
35-MM SLIDE BY ANDREA ROTH, 1980. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



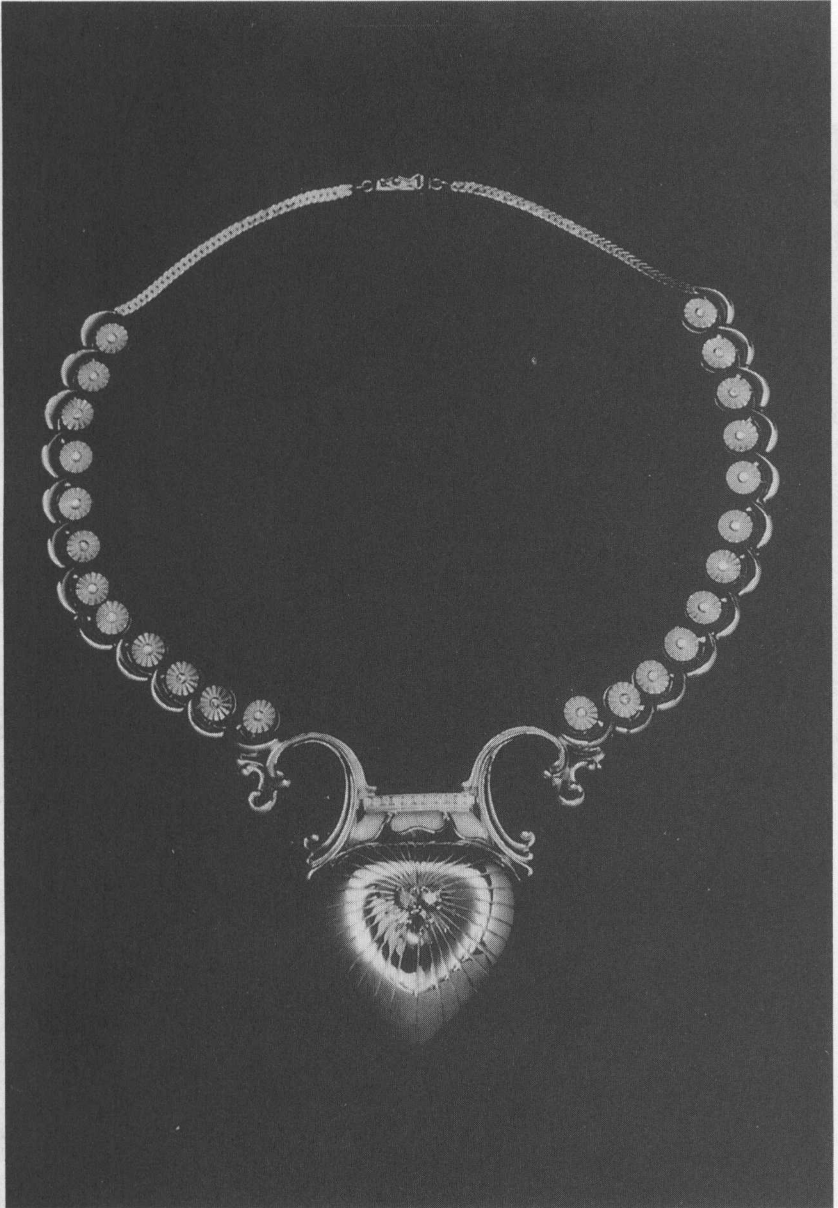
Shooting photos, Los Angeles Environmental Installation.

35-MM SLIDE BY ANDREA ROTH, 1980. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Filming. Unknown location.

COLOR PRINT BY HERB ELSKY, EARLY 1970S. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Necklace for Lady Diana Mukpo. Designed by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, in collaboration with Gina Stick.

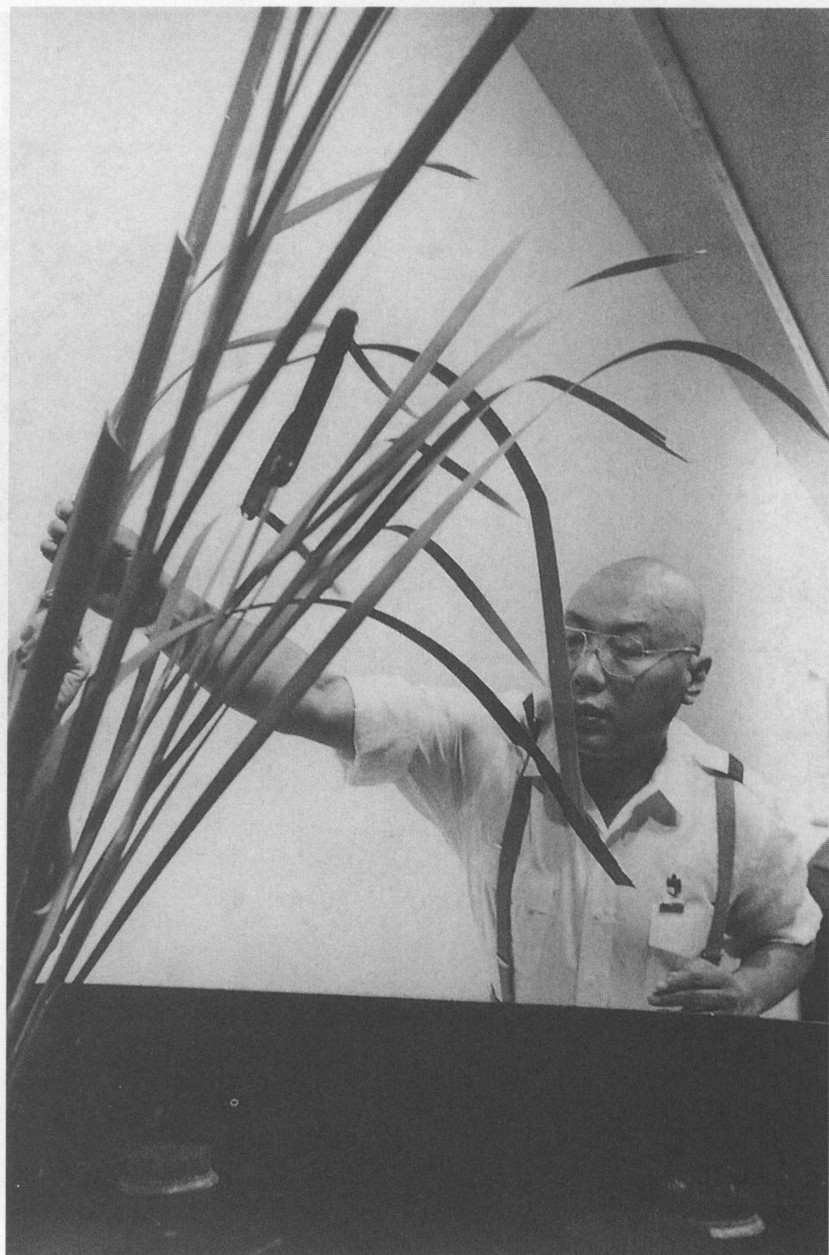
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, EARLY 1970S. ORIGINAL PRINT SUPPLIED BY GINA STICK. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Spontaneous calligraphy. Dharma Art Seminar, Boulder, Colorado.
PHOTO BY ROBERT DEL TREDICI, 1980.



Flower exhibit, Denver.
PHOTO BY ROBERT DEL TREDICI, 1980.

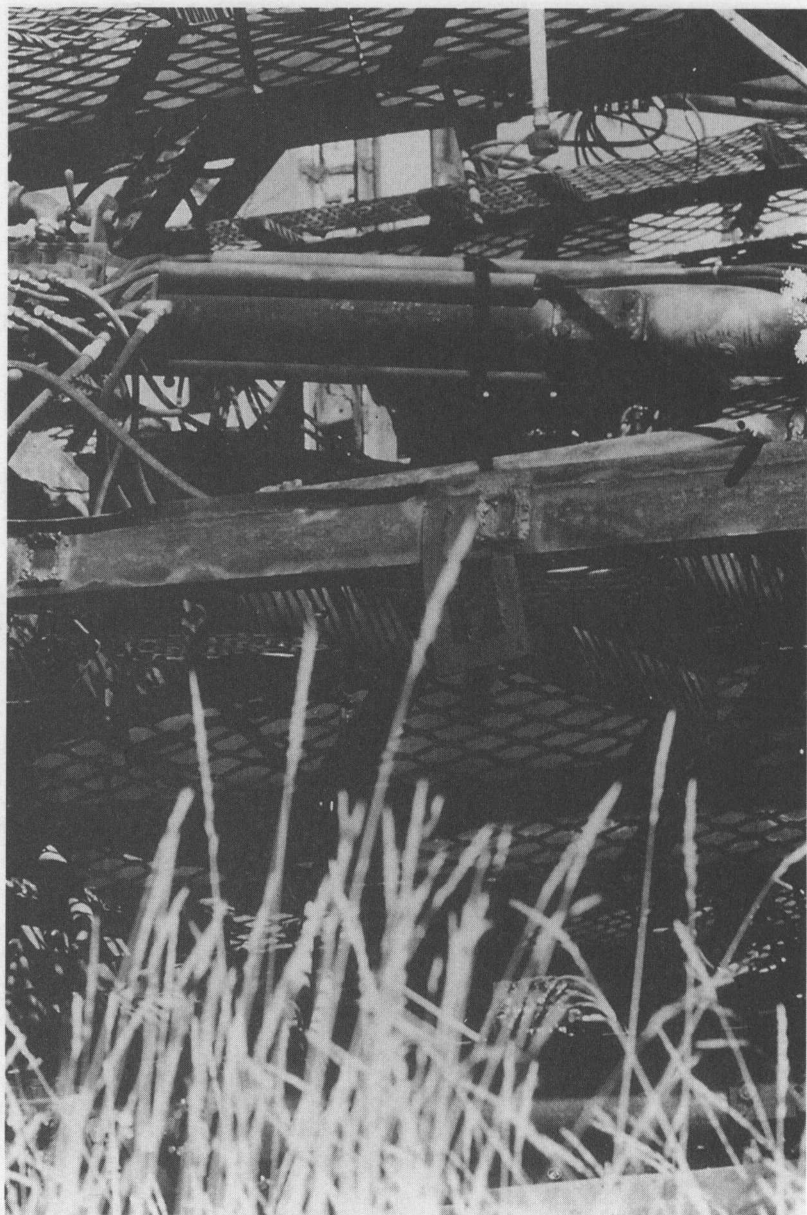


Placing reeds. Flower exhibit, Denver.
PHOTO BY ROBERT DEL TREDICI, 1980.



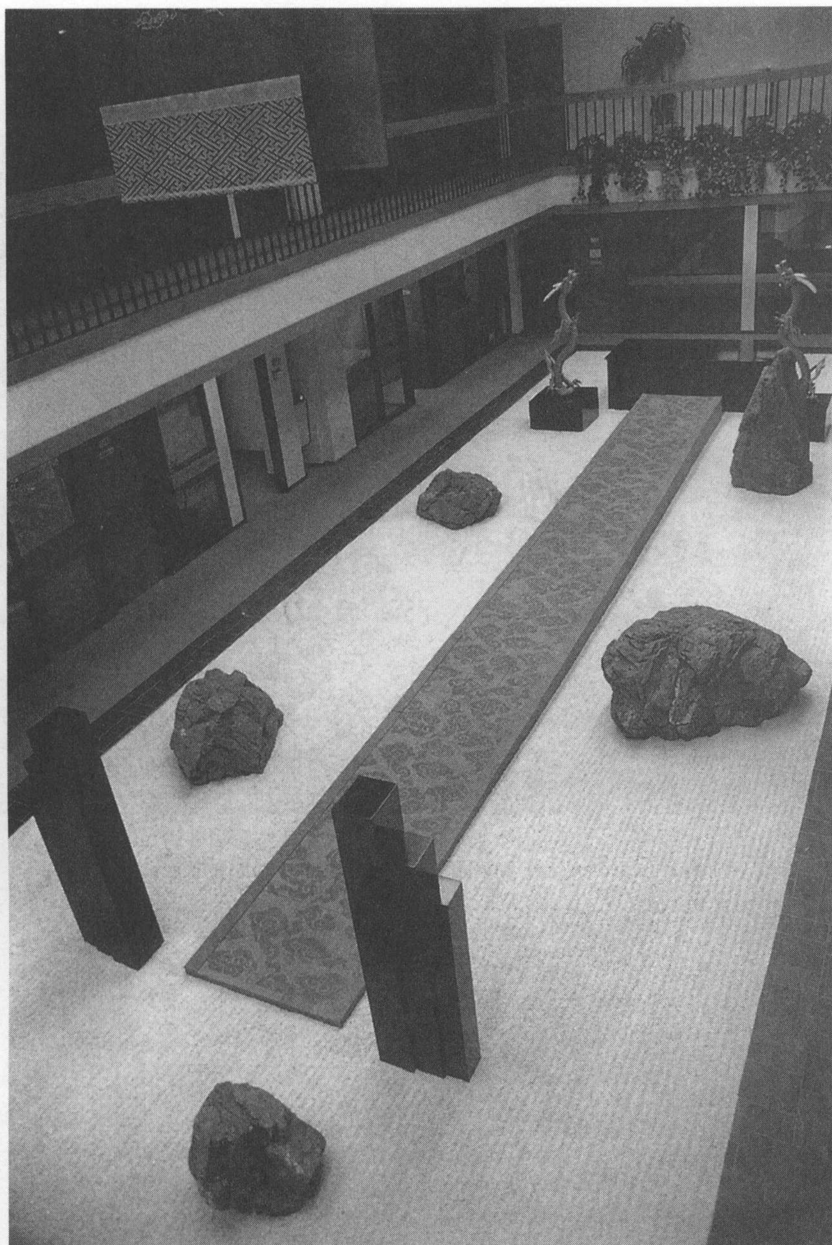
Lichen. "This is a piece of rock with lichen on it. It's another overcrowded, ratna situation, which provides some kind of space at the same time. It's like the view I have of all you people from up here. There are not very many gaps—you almost cover the whole floor, and I regard that as space."

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1974. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Construction site. "You might say that this photograph is a typical example of aggression. Everything in the picture goes on in its own way without admitting any little suggestions, and everything in it is prefabricated except the grass. Nevertheless, it could also be a point of gentleness. There are no trips involved in scenery like this. There is natural beauty, natural sloppiness, and natural chaos."

35-MM SLIDE BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, 1974. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Formal garden. Designed by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, in collaboration with Kanjuro Shibata Sensei. GES Building, Boulder, Colorado.

PHOTO BY LIZA MATTHEWS. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES



Garden. Los Angeles Environmental Installation.
35-MM SLIDE BY ANDREA ROTH, 1980. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Library. Los Angeles Environmental Installation.

35-MM SLIDE BY ANDREA ROTH, 1980. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.

New Sight

Symbolism is a question of gaining new sight. It is being extremely inquisitive to see things in their own nature.

SYMBOLISM IS A QUESTION of gaining new sight. It is being extremely inquisitive to see things in their own nature, not always wanting to change things. The opposite of symbolic vision is resentment, fear, and too much philosophy. You want to change the whole world. You want to hang the picture upside down, but somehow that doesn't work. The Sheratons, Holiday Inns, delicatessens, and restaurants are still there. It is all still there, completely solid and definite. If you take one attitude toward it, the whole thing is absolutely humorless and rigid. It doesn't mean anything; it's the same bad old life, which gives you shivers in your system. You have had problems all your life dealing with things as they are, which are not so good. But you could take a different attitude, seeing things as they are in their own value, in their own spaciousness.

Basically, what we perceive is a square world that has a ceiling, walls, and floor. It is the same as seeing through a camera lens. There are perspectives of all kinds. To begin with, there is space above—the ceiling or heaven. Some people want to think there is something above the ceiling, called a loft. All sorts of people live up there and conduct business downward. And some people think that there is something behind the wall: your neighbors, cities, highways. Then you have the floor, and maybe downstairs there is a cellar, or the heart of the earth where a lot of hot things are going on. It might explode at any time. That's a possibility someday, I suppose. So we are living in a square world.

Even if we are outside of our house, we still are living in a square

world. In this case, when we look up and see the ceiling, it's called the sky. We look around us and see the mountains or buildings. We look down and see streets or paths. That world is usually what we see. We would like to have somewhere to lean back and take a rest, chairs with backrests and arms we can lean on. Then we have the front, in which we could launch our projects. But we still have the ceiling. We would like to keep a ceiling and a roof both, as shelter from rain, hail, and snowfall. In other words, we are living in a box, and our vision is a box.

Photographs are also boxlike. We have a square camera with a square perspective, and as we wind our film we see one square after another. That squareness seems to be our general frame of reference. But we don't have to be too concerned with that squareness—we could dance with it. Let's view that corner, this corner, this corner and that corner. Above we could allow lots of space; at the bottom we could allow a lot of solidity; on the sides we could play with how we view our world. If the world is pushing us to the left or the right, we could go along with that. As long as we don't fight, there's no problem. We could have the right invading our left; that's okay, that's a nice picture. If the left is invading our right, that also makes a nice picture.

The basic principle of photography from that point of view is viewing things as they are in their own ordinary nature. It is very simple and direct. We should be prepared to see how we can present a picture or concept in our minds. Can we do it or not? The obvious answer is that we can do it. However, we actually should be willing to see a particular vision without expectation or conceptualization. We should have the perspective of being willing to take any kind of good old, bad old shot. The whole point is that we should be extremely careful and inquisitive about what we see in our world: what we see with our eyes, what we actually perceive, both how we see and what we see. This is very important.

There's an old saying, "Seeing's not believing." That's true. When we see something, we don't have to believe in it, but we do have to see it properly. We have to *look* at it—then it might be true. The interesting point here is that in sharpening our perception completely and properly, we don't have to put philosophical or metaphysical jargon into it. We are just dealing precisely and directly with how our perception or vision works as we look at an object and how our mind changes by looking at it.

In discussing symbolism or iconography, we have to consider everything in absolute detail. We have to think slowly, to slow down. It is not so much getting ideas and information as fast as we can, but as *slowly* as we can, so that we have an understanding of the basic setup. For instance, we could examine a very high quality Tibetan thangka executed by a great Tibetan art master. There's blue paint ground from lapis lazuli; white from some kind of chalk; the red is vermilion; the yellow is pure gold; and the green is a kind of vegetable paint. If you take such a thangka and divide it into small sections, you might get some idea as to how things can proceed by paying more attention to details. Everything in that thangka was carefully chosen by an individual person who was actually interested in such works of art. Likewise, we need to see how much effort and understanding we have to put into our lives to live properly and completely. Otherwise, we may have a problem, because we want to do it all right away. For instance, we feel we could paint the whole thangka tomorrow, make an exact replica of it. But this is not an art course on how to paint pictures; we are training you how to see things as they are.

When you see a thangka, you could just look—not in terms of it being a fantastic work of art, but as a simple visual object. Just look at it. Feel the difference between seeing a thangka and seeing someone have a car crash. See the stillness and the movement. This is not regarded as a fantastic contrast of metaphysical worlds, but as a simple visual perception. You can actually do it, you can see it. If you look too long, you will get bored, because you would like to see the next goodie; at this point it would be better to go very slowly. [See illustration on page 60.]

Usually, we are restless with our visual perception. Even when we see something fantastically beautiful, we are shy in actually relating with it. That shyness is connected with aggression. We are unable to see things properly, as they really are. If we see beautiful things, we are so fascinated and interested: we would like to touch and handle them; we would like to smell them and hear them. On the other hand, when we see something ugly or terrible, such as dogshit on the street, we don't want to touch it, we don't want to see it, and we try to avoid the whole thing—"Yuck!"

It is very interesting how our mind and our psychology work, how perception conducts our life. But we really don't give in to it, we don't let go completely. That doesn't mean we have to eat dogshit or abandon

beautiful things, but it's interesting how we reject things that have the slightest offensiveness to us. We don't like it at all. And if we do like something, if there's a slight suggestion of promise, we like it so much that we want to get right into it. The result is that usually we don't really *look* at anything at all. Particularly if we have lots of money, if we see a beautiful fabric, beautiful painting, or any beautiful item, we just want to buy it. That's our first impulse. Then we become afraid of it. We wonder whether it's worth buying, how much it costs, whether it's the real thing or not. We get panicky, step back a little, and get completely confused. By then, we have no idea whether we want it or not, our minds are so confused.

The problem comes from not being able to spend enough time looking at things as they are, directly, properly, clearly. That seems to be one of the basic points in how to view symbolism. It is a question of reality, how we view reality. You have an idea that when you begin to experience reality you are going to be entertained, that you won't have any more pain. But quite possibly seeing reality may be more painful. Ultimate reality may be more painful than any pain you experience in your life. That seems to be an important point. Although you would like to see things changing—not working out as they were, but reshuffling themselves—at the same time, the world remains as it is.

The Process of Perception

There is a kind of standing-still quality, or stalemate, in which comments and remarks become unimportant, and seeing things as they are becomes the real thing. It's like a frog sitting in the middle of a big puddle, with rain constantly falling on it. The frog simply winks its eyes at each raindrop that falls on it, but it doesn't change its posture.

THE QUESTION OF REALITY is a very confusing one. Nobody knows, but everybody knows that somebody knows. That seems to be the problem we are facing: maybe nobody knows at all or maybe everybody knows. So we should not purely trust the information, suggestions, and ideas that come to us from external sources, but actually work with ourselves and try to develop our own personal understanding and appreciation of reality. Reality seems to be the basic space in which we operate in our ordinary, everyday life. It brings some sense of comfort and, at the same time, some sense of confusion. There seems to be a basic play between the two.

When we begin to perceive our phenomenal world, we do not perceive it as purely gray and nondescript, as though it were camouflaged. In fact, we see highlights of all kinds. For example, when we perceive an ordinary object—when we take a look at an egg or a cup of tea—there's a sense of boredom, because such a thing is so ordinary and domestic. We already know what an egg is like, and we know what a cup of tea is like. But when we are presented with something extraordinary, we begin to feel we are being treated to a special show. So in either the ordinary or the excited state of mind, whether we find the world extremely boring or extraordinarily entertaining, there's always a sense of confusion and aggression.

Such aggression is an obstacle to visual dharma, to hearing and the other sense perceptions, and to understanding reality in its fullest sense. So some kind of fundamental discipline seems to be absolutely important and necessary. Without any actual practice of sitting meditation to enable us to make friends with ourselves, nothing can be heard or seen to its fullest extent; nothing can be perceived as we would like to perceive it. But slowly and naturally, through our discipline, we gradually begin to branch out into the real world, the world of chaos, pain, and anxiety.

When we reach the state of nonaggression, it is not that we cease to perceive anything, but we begin to perceive in a particular way. With the absence of aggression, there is further clarity, because nothing is based on anxiety and nothing is based on ideas or ideals of any kind. Instead, we are beginning to see things without making any demands. We are no longer trying to buy or sell anything to anybody. It is a direct and very personal experience.

Our experience of the state of nonaggression becomes so personal that sometimes it is quite painful. Because all obstacles of any kind have been completely cleared out, for the first time we are seeing things from the point of view of pure vision and clarity. We begin to hear music purely and see colors and visual objects in their fullest purity. When we become more sensitive to experiences in this way, they become more penetrating, and they begin to make more sense. Therefore, there is the possibility of irritation. But at the same time, there is also a lot of humor. We no longer feel that we have to hassle, or try to swim across this ocean of tremendous demands the world makes on us. We don't have to push against it anymore. There's a sense of clarity, which is extraordinarily pleasing, and at the same time, there is a sense of overwhelming precision, which makes our experience terribly painful. So we could say that this particular journey of seeing things as they are, experiencing the iconography and sacred art of the world, is a state of mind—as much as Bombay Gin.

In many cases, we try so hard to understand. We are so eager that our eagerness begins to become numbness. We are so eager that we misunderstand things a lot. Sometimes our mind becomes completely blank, and we can't actually communicate. We forget how to put our sentences together; we forget what to write down; we lose our memories. All kinds of problematic things take place in us as an expression of eagerness, which is a somewhat euphemistic term for mental speediness. But this is

a long project. It is important to study and work with this material and to examine our life and our experience. We could learn to experience our world properly, so that our life becomes worth living and further learning takes place. We can perceive the world with lots of space, or we can perceive the world with no space, but that is saying the same thing. The experience of no space at the same time happens to be space. So when we begin to overcrowd the whole thing, the crowdedness becomes space.

Visual perception becomes reality gradually. According to the traditional pattern, beginning to see something visually is a process that has many levels. First we see with our eyes, then we smell with our eyes, then we hear with our eyes, and then we begin to touch the object with our eyes. Each particular sensory perception has those same aspects taking place. For instance, at the auditory level, when we hear something, we see it first, then we hear it, then we smell it, then we touch it. So psychological shifts take place all the time. Perceiving is a gradual process.

Realistically, when we *see* something and experience it personally, our first connection is made abruptly, impulsively. As we perceive further, we can *smell* that visual object: its texture, its setup, and the vibrations it presents to us. Then we begin to *hear* that visual object. We can hear its texture as well as its breath, whether it breathes hard or soft. We can actually hear the heartbeat of that visual object. So we see its heartbeat and hear it at the same time. Finally, because we have gone through this whole process, we begin to take an immense interest in that visual object, and we try to *touch* it visually. We commit ourselves to that particular perception, and we actually begin to relate with whatever goes on in our world. We begin to touch our world, to feel the real texture of it, not just the sound or smell or first visual flash of the texture. In that way, we are able to establish ourselves in total communication.

That process takes place all the time, in whatever we do in our life and at whatever perceptual level we are relating with. Whether it is our hearing system, smelling system, seeing system, or tasting system; whether we are eating food, hearing music, seeing visual things, wearing different types of clothes, or taking a swim, those four categories—sight, smell, hearing, and touch—take place all the time. That is how we actually perceive things as they are. However, sometimes we jump back and forth instead of going through the regular, gradual process of seeing

things as they are properly. First we touch some kind of edge, then we bounce back from that edge, and then we return to it again. We begin to have a dialogue with ourselves, to tell ourselves a story: "Maybe this is not right, maybe this is not true, maybe this is the ideal situation. Let's talk about it, let's think about it." We go on and on and on that way, bouncing back and forth all the time. That is the neurotic, or psychotic, tendency in visual perception.

Visual perception does not have anything to do with whether or not we are seeing colors properly. Even if we are color-blind, we can still do it. When we begin to see something, first we have the question of visual perspective: the world we see is framed by our eyes, so it has a sort of oval shape, or egg shape. We can't see beyond the limitations of our eyes. Then we begin to smell, which goes on in the back of our head. We smell *behind* what we see. Some kind of commentator comes along and says that this object has a smell or odor to it. Not only that, but then we begin to hear that particular object from all around—not behind and in front alone, but underneath us and above us as well. We begin to sense that something is there, and we try to figure out what it might be. And finally, we begin to establish some kind of relationship. We begin to touch, which is a very direct and forward situation. We begin to feel it personally, and we try to make decisions, saying, "I'll buy it. I like it," or "I reject it. I don't like it." The whole process takes place in a fraction of a second, very fast. Jing! Jing! Jing! Jing! That whole mechanism is very fast and very simple, and it takes place all the time.

As far as dharma art or absolute experience is concerned, along with our experience we begin to see things as they are, touch on things as they are. Then we begin just to *be* with object perceptions, without accepting or rejecting. We simply try to *be* that way. There is a kind of standing-still quality, or stalemate, in which comments and remarks become unimportant, and seeing things as they are becomes the real thing. It's like a frog sitting in the middle of a big puddle, with rain constantly falling on it. The frog simply winks its eyes at each raindrop that falls on it, but it doesn't change its posture. It doesn't try either to jump into the puddle or to get out of the puddle. That quality is what is symbolized by a sitting bull, so the frog becomes a sitting bull.

Being and Projecting

In this practice, you go slowly through the threefold process of perception: the sense of being, the sense of doing, and the sense of linking together.

IN THE BUDDHIST TRADITION, it is said that there are six psychological sense perceptions—seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking—which operate on six corresponding types of sense objects. These are referred to as the twelve ayatanas. And according to Buddhist psychology, we go through a threefold process in connection with each of those sense perceptions. The first is a sense of existence. When you begin to listen or to look at something, you have a sense of being. This is just a general sense of being; nothing in particular is planned or conceptualized—simply a sense of being. Second, there is a flicker or snapping process, which flashes to the sense object. And third, there is communication between the two. Your flashing process and your sense of existence are brought together.

As a space awareness practice, we could work with our sense perceptions in that way, in a kind of slow-motion version of that. First you work with the sense of existence. You are standing and you are there. Feel that basic sense of being. Then, in order to prove that existence, you have to do something, to project out. Finally, you begin to feel some sort of play back and forth, as the projector and the projection relate together. So in this practice, you go slowly through the threefold process of perception: the sense of being, the sense of doing, and the sense of linking together.

In this exercise, we are trying to use some of the notions of Buddhist psychology in a practice. The whole process starts with an embryonic sense perception. Before you have actually seen the object or moved

your body, there is the *potential* of using the sense organs. Then we use speech, hearing our own speech; visual perception; the movement of our body; and possibly we could smell the whole thing as well. The way in which we usually project ourselves is made into a sort of formula: you start with a sense of being, putting yourself into a situation, slowly dissolving the edge, and then executing whatever is there.

Obviously, the sense of being can't be one solid thing. It moves constantly. It projects out and in, and it is very fickle. Nevertheless, there should be some attempt to relate to the overall situation, to a sense of the whole. It is like looking at a string of beads or an animal's tail. When a lot of little beads are strung together, you have a mala; hundreds of small hairs put together become a tail. So there is a general sense of being, made out of lots of little things put together.

Lost Horizons

One day passes and another day comes along, and everything happens the same. But basically, we are so afraid of the brilliance coming at us, and the sharp experience of our life, that we can't even focus our eyes.

RELATIVE SYMBOLISM is based on experiencing one's world in a different fashion. This does not refer to some superspiritual-materialistic vision based on altered neurological perceptions. It simply means an experience that transcends the common phenomena of good and bad, promises and threats. This kind of visual perception is fundamental and basic, and it can only develop through training in the discipline of meditation. Without such training, without such taming of the mind, we either misjudge situations or are overpowered by them. We are unable to perceive things as they are in the fullest sense.

People struggle in all kinds of ways to realize and understand a higher level of vision. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of it in the work of great artists, such as William Blake or Shakespeare. We constantly try to reach higher and higher, as if we were dwarves. But we do not need to regard ourselves as dwarves. It is always possible for us to pick up on certain highlights and principles of absolute visual dharma. At first they may not be continuous experiences but occur to us in a haphazard and accidental way. So we might have a problem with that, as it is not quite in keeping with our speed and our desire to learn more.

There is also a lot of room. Because of that, when you actually do begin to perceive things in your own true way, you find that the perceptions you are experiencing can be extremely painful and irritating. It hurts a lot, like looking at the sun with our naked eyes. It is overly powerful. The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* talks about how we shy away from

brilliant and penetrating visions, but when we see something subdued and pleasant, we are magnetized. It is quite possible we might go along with those inviting visions rather than the penetrating ones. But the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* also says that if you go along with the bright and penetrating visions, you might be saved; whereas if you are fascinated by the beautiful, fantastic, colorful visions, you might be trapped in the samsaric rebirth cycle again and again.

We have problems with the kind of visual perceptions that dominate our life. People are generally afraid to jump into a high-energy pool; they prefer to latch on to a moderate, toned-down, monotone energy. That seems to be much simpler and cheaper. What's wrong with us, if I may say so, is that we are too cowardly. We might think we are extremely brave and able, that we can fight anyone who fights us, overcome them with logical debates and put our points across clearly. We might think we are completely well equipped, with all the defense mechanisms we need—and not only that, but all the offensive weapons as well. People do feel that way sometimes, but even that is an act of cowardice. We are so paranoid that we want to be prepared for any possible danger. We want to shield ourselves from the reality of fear. We would like to see something very gentle and colorful. But if we look very closely at our desire for something gentle and colorful, as opposed to the brightness, we find that basically we just want to get sick. We prefer to be nauseated rather than to be excited by the pool of energy. If we are sick, it is easy to say, "I'm sorry, but I have an upset stomach. I must lie down. Please forgive me. I can't take part in your party." We are so convincing. We are constantly looking for a way to chicken out.

We really don't want to deal with the bright lights, the very precise, sharp, penetrating, cutting brilliance. Nobody would like to work with that; instead, there is hesitation. People often resort to devotion as a way of chickening out: "If I trust and worship what I have experienced, probably the brilliant radiation will not hurt me, but accept me." Another possibility is to philosophize the whole thing: "Since my philosophical understanding is quite a friendly one, I might be saved and accepted in my vision of sharp, penetrating experience." We could quite safely say that both of those are attempts to shield ourselves, because we are afraid of the bright, precise, penetrating realities of life. We don't want to have anything to do with it, if possible.

Sometimes you feel embarrassed that you are put on the spot. You

feel you must make some attempt to deal with it, or at least pay lip service to it, saying, "That's a fantastic experience, so penetrating, so powerful. Okay, I'm going to do it!" Or we make a big deal out of it, "Here I am, naked! I'm just about to jump off the cliff! Pain or pleasure, I don't care—here I come!" But when we are actually put on the spot, we can't do it. Whether we are subtle or dramatic, it's still just lip service. All of us without exception are cowards. We know the consequences, but we are not willing to leap. The penetrating experiences in our life are extremely powerful, unshakable, so true. That does not only apply to visual perception, but also to emotional experience: visual perception and emotional experience always go together.

Visual perception is the first gate, or entrance, through which we relate with our emotions. And when the object of our emotions is not literally visible, in front of our eyes, we psychologically imagine the visual perception, and we begin to feel the emotion. For example, when we love someone very dearly, painfully so, we frequently have visual perceptions of that person. That builds up to creating imaginary conversations. He speaks to you, you speak to him. You develop a feeling of physical contact, maybe eating in a restaurant together or driving around in the country. All those perceptions are connected to visual perception. Visual perception is the vanguard of all the other sense perceptions. The second level is auditory experience.

We are extraordinarily fertile and have immense potential, but at the same time, we don't really want to commit ourselves. We prefer to lie back and nest in our neurosis and rest and rest, like an ingrown toenail. Sometimes we get bored and try to entertain ourselves. But we are so polite and childish, whether we go to the movies, eat in fine restaurants, have a few drinks with friends, or take a trip to Asia or Europe if we have money. We do all kinds of little things, but they are not *real* things. What we are doing is not quite what we should be doing. You might regard yourself as a blunt and direct person, but you're still being too polite. You might vomit your neurosis right and left—shout and yell at people, fight and kill, make love—but you are still back to square one. We are such cowards. It's so embarrassing that we can't talk about it or even think about it. What's the point of all these little secrets, these little games that we play? We seem to enjoy them. One day passes and another day comes along, and everything happens the same. But basically,

we are so afraid of the brilliance coming at us, and the sharp experience of our life, that we can't even focus our eyes.

We are afraid, and we don't really want to relate with anything at all. We feel somewhat awkward. Sometimes we deal with our awkwardness very professionally, as in talking to the policeman who stops us on the highway. And sometimes we deal with it by acting like we were talking to our kids. But none of those little tactics work. Those imitation professional tactics don't click. At that point, we don't see anything, we don't hear anything, we don't speak. We are blind, deaf, and mute. This is the basic process we go through, and we should do something about it. It is very important to do something, because we are not completely paralyzed yet. There is still a lot of energy. We can actually begin to face reality as it is. I don't see any problem with that.

The problem boils down to the fact that we do not really want to experience reality in the fullest sense at all. Instead, we always try to bring in a substitute reality. For instance, if we find that our child is not going along with our expectations, we say, "One day this child will come to his senses and come back to us." If we have a lost lover, we say, "Sooner or later he will return to me and realize how I really feel about him." Even with a lost pet, a lost dog or cat, we hope that it will return and recognize us. Those little gestures are somewhat pathetic and don't make much sense. With LSD or any kind of drug experience, when the first trip is terrible, we would like to make the second trip better, so we take it again. "I was just on the verge of discovering something when I was on my fifth trip. Maybe I should take a sixth." That approach perpetuates itself all the time, but it never catches the fish in the net. And in the world of art, we could take the same superficial approach, in which everything is very interesting and very beautiful and then the whole thing is over. The memory of what you have gone through does not even take part in your dreams. Everything is forgotten, a lost horizon.

Giving

Aggression acts like a big veil preventing us from seeing the precision of the functioning of absolute symbolism, as well as relative symbolism. And the only possible remedy, according to the traditional approach, is surrendering.

APPROACHING SYMBOLISM based on our desire constantly to learn more and more is questionable, because a lot of aggression is taking place there. Not in the sense of being angry, or losing your temper, but aggression as a fundamental obstacle. All the collections you have made, and continue to make, are questionable. When you get really angry, your eyes are bloodshot and you can't see properly; you begin to stutter and you can't speak properly. You become a mean vegetable. That kind of aggression is the greatest obstacle to perception and to perceiving symbolism. If you really see the city of Boulder, if you really see the mountains of Boulder or the skies of Boulder, there is no aggression. But I somewhat doubt that you have really seen it. This remark is not condescending, putting down your honorable existence. It is a reminder. Maybe you haven't got anything together to experience what you should experience. That's highly possible, because aggression is very powerful. When you project toward an object, you want to capture it, as a spider captures a fly, and suck its blood. You may feel refreshed, but that is a big problem. The definition of dharma art, as well as iconography, is the personal experience of nonaggression.

There is more to aggression than losing your temper and beating your husband or your wife or your kid or having a fight with your neighbors. All of that is simply a by-product of aggression. Actual aggression takes place in our minds, in our hearts. It makes our blood boil. It can make us so completely stupid and offended that we cannot even see.

At that point, very strangely, you reach a kind of pseudo experience of egolessness. You become completely one with the aggression. When you really lose your temper, you don't exist; only your aggression exists. You lose your reference point. That is what you are most afraid of. You are so outraged, you see red, your heart beats very fast, and you begin to hear this low-pitched sound. And you end up just a little bundle of a flea, red in color, a flea who would like to jump but can't, a mean, bloodthirsty flea. You may think you're big, but you're just a flea.

Aggression creates a lot of obstacles to experiencing symbolism. When we talk about aggression, people get angry. They don't want to hear any of it; they want nothing to do with it. "Tell me something peaceful, good. You're supposed to calm my mind." I'm afraid the truth of the matter is it doesn't work that way. We have to explore what we have, and how deafness and blindness come about because of our personal aggression. When we are aggressive, we would like to find something out very badly. We would like to possess the truth, chew it, swallow it, and eat it up. That is a big problem. We demand truth as we would a piece of chocolate. But we are still angry and always want more. So we look for the next block of chocolate. We go on like that and never realize how many trips we lay on ourselves. That makes us deaf, dumb, and blind. Our perception of symbolism is completely blocked. That is a very terrifying, terrifying space.

Aggression acts like a big veil preventing us from seeing the precision of the functioning of absolute symbolism, as well as relative symbolism. And the only possible remedy, according to the traditional approach, is surrendering. That seems to be the only way to overcome aggression. Surrendering does not mean reducing yourself to a child jumping into someone's lap, looking for parents. Surrendering is simply wanting to give, to let go of all kinds of personal trips, economic trips, and spiritual trips involved in holding back. Holding back, or aggression, only makes us more blind. So giving up, opening, surrendering, is very important, because you finally begin to let go of your aggression. You begin to say, "Get the hell out!"

You feel you would like to give, to open, to take a leap. Depending on the level of your understanding, that might even mean giving in to your own aggression, letting that aggression take you over. You couldn't care less. You have some faith and trust in the basic truth coming from the lineage that actually speaks the truth of nonaggression. It is such a

relief when you begin to give and give and give. I don't mean the conventional idea of giving, where if you have ten dollars in your bank account, you might give five and keep the other five for your upkeep. Giving away fifty percent of your aggression and reserving the other fifty percent for holding your trip together is not quite enough. You have to give up the whole thing. And each time you give, your vision begins to clear, and there's less of a filter over your pupils; your hearing begins to clear, and there's less wax on your eardrums. So you begin to hear and see much better as you give up more and more of this uptightness, this holding back, this resentment. You're not doing anybody a favor particularly, and there is no one to say thank you, like a country parson thanking you for giving money to the church, which may seem fake. You don't give it to anybody; you just give it away without expecting anything in return. You just give, give, give, let go. Each time you give, more clarity takes place, and you are better able to see the real meaning of symbolism. The twofold reality of relative and absolute symbolism can be seen very clearly.

Giving and opening oneself is not particularly painful, when you begin to do it. But the idea of giving and opening is very painful. When you are asked to give, to take a leap, it feels terrible. You don't want to do it, although you are somewhat tickled by the idea. "Maybe I'll make some kind of breakthrough or maybe I'll lose everything." Let's go along with that inquisitive mind and give, open further, open completely! Sooner or later we're going to do it, so the sooner the better. I hope this is not too complicated. Basically the only thing we are discussing is giving. It is quite simple: giving and the absence of aggression.

Once you give, once you open your eyes and ears and everything is completely cleaned up, when everything has been seen through completely, the end result is a sudden experience of precision. It is so precise and clear that it is like getting new spectacles or a new hearing aid. The whole thing becomes so precise and so direct that it's painful. You want to go back to your old fucked-up system: "I'd rather be deaf than hear this. I'd rather be blind than see that." In some sense, that is like what the entire older generation is saying, because they don't want to see their children growing up in their own way. That is a problem for a lot of parents. So we end up in a very complicated situation. We are seeing so much that we can't handle it—things are so precise, so direct, and so true. "How can we protect ourselves from the truth? Let's run back and

reject the whole thing, let's lie a little bit. Let's cover our heads with blankets and pretend nothing has happened and go back to the past, the fantastic, dirty, neurotic, juicy, good old days. We prefer that." It is very possible that we would like to go back and degrade ourselves. If we are forced to see too much, we would like to reduce ourselves to infants, go back to our mother's womb and become an embryo, or maybe a sperm, and then just disappear altogether. But we can do better than that.

Let's face the facts of reality and its precision, which is so irritating and powerful. Once we begin to experience its workings and the texture, once we really perceive it, it is no longer problematic. The reason it could become problematic is because we are not inquisitive enough to perceive the symbolism or signs that come up or occur to us. But we now can experience the symbolism precisely and directly. Having taken the leap, having abandoned home ground, you are like a naked child without preconceptions. You can experience the symbolism on the spot. You can do that. You are clear, precise, and direct. And that precision becomes very powerful and important.

Let's not complain about the past; it is such a waste of energy. You could do a lot of things for humankind if you could come out and be precise. Let us face the world without wearing sunglasses. Take off your glasses and perceive the light. That is very much needed. You can do so much, not only for yourself but for others. You could contribute so much help and service to people who are suffering, who are trapped in all kinds of problems. You are not dead yet, and you can't pretend to be dead. Sometimes you might feel you would like to join the dead world so nobody would bother you, but it's not as simple as that. There is life after death. Things are not as simple as you think. You can't just act on impulse. You have to give more.

So please pay some consideration to this mutual world of ours. We create this world mutually. Maybe it's not so good, not so beautiful, but it's not so bad either—it's a regular world. You can get along in this world, and once you begin to relate with the world, you can appreciate the idea of symbolism. Aggression and paranoia, being unable to leap, are obstacles to symbolism. But once we stop rejecting the world, the world begins to pounce on us. Symbolism is imposed on us. Realizations and perceptions of all kinds of realities begin to take shape. There is symbolism right and left and front and back.

Self-Existing Humor

The separation between "you" and "I," you and your world, you and your God, is cut through by a sense of humor.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT to appreciate your world: the place you live, your lifestyle, your style of cooking, your style of viewing the visual world altogether. Basically, you've got to know who you are and what you are, to begin with; otherwise, you will just be another agent selling the dharma for your own benefit. If you appreciate your world, then you might pick something up that personally benefits your spiritual journey and increases your wisdom. You could see the world as it is, with its own perspective, and with a touch of insight. You could learn how to look at a needle on a pine tree, how to smell a raccoon, how to drink a cup of tea, how to feel your hair, your dress, your clothes, how to touch your feet on the ground, how to walk. At the perceptual level, everything is artistic in some sense, but there has to be communication and real perception. Without that we have a big barrier. I don't feel like talking to anybody, if they have no actual interest in life. If you're only interested in recapturing information about thangkas, you would be better off studying Mexican cooking or learning how to make horseshoes. Symbolism is not simply an art-school project—it's much more serious than that. There is a lot of power behind the whole thing.

Certain energies take place in you when you begin to view visual dharma. Having understood symbolism in general and your perceptual world—the world of phenomena that is colorful, nasty, exciting, helpful, and all the rest—something actually takes place in your visual perception. You can't avoid it. We are trying to take that particular essence and work with it. The essence of that perception is not a work of art but a

lifestyle that can be shared throughout your life. Walking on the sidewalk, crossing at the red light, watching your eggs in the frying pan, listening to the tea kettle whistling—the little things in life are the most important.

Ultimately, there are three levels to viewing symbolism or visual dharma. These levels apply to dharma painting as well as the dharma pictures that exist spontaneously in your life. First you need a *sense of humor,* which is based on an understanding as to how things work. Ordinarily, people have the idea that humor means you must be laughing at somebody behind their back, or that you think everything is corny and funny and doesn't make any sense. There is immense aggression in that; such humor is crude and resentful. But in this case, humor is some kind of delight. We begin to learn something about how reality works, not by studying scholastically but by perceiving how humor exists within the cosmic world. With that kind of humor, we begin to see through the separateness of me and others, others and me. The separation between "you" and "I," you and your world, you and your God, is cut through by a sense of humor. That is the basic point.

After that we come up with the second level: *basic space,* in which humor is self-existent. We begin to see the manifestation of a cosmic structure. It is very personal, very ordinary, and very matter-of-fact—nothing divine or blissed out, particularly. There is some kind of complete, open space, ground that has never been messed up by plowing or by sowing seeds—complete virgin territory.

At the third level, experience becomes much more realistic, much more grounded and personal. The perceiver, or person with a sense of humor, is beginning to be able to relate with things as they are very closely and precisely. That *precision* has all kinds of sharp edges. The idea of peace, the idea of harmony, the idea of aggression or negativity—all things are included. So visual dharma is based on having these three foundations: a nonindividualistic sense of humor, a sense of all-pervasive space, and an appreciation of the play of phenomena.

At the beginning, there is a person with a sense of humor. Then there is a perception—which is a big, wide-open, empty sky, bright blue in color. Finally, there is a little comet coming out of the blue sky—or maybe a little cloud, or maybe a little bird begins to fly, or a bigger bird, or an airplane. Something takes place in your openness that begins to change the mood. The openness is acknowledged by the different tones

of energy that take place. Peaceful energy is benevolent, pacifying, harmless. There is a sense of warmth and encouragement. Wrathful energy is mocking, exposing. Our caricature is exposed and starts to churn up. Sometimes it's savage and deadly; sometimes it's dignified and powerful. That all takes place quite simply.

Then, having already developed those experiences, we have some sense of understanding the teachings of enlightenment. We begin to appreciate reality in its fullest sense. All the experiences we are going through are somewhat workable. And it is not just your lonely trip, but somebody has done it already. Somebody has the idea and the information and the lineage behind it. So there is a sense of the warmth of the guru, helper, spiritual friend, elder, master, medicine man, or whatever you'd like to call it. Finally, you come down to earth, where those experiences are not all that outrageous or fantastic, but *real.*

Outrageousness

I don't think you learn dharma art, you discover it; and you do not teach dharma art, but you set up an environment so it can be discovered.

DHARMA ART IS BASED on energy and conviction. In this regard, the perceptions of everyday life are seen as a resource, or working basis, for both the work of art and the practice of meditation. But there seems to be a need for two further types of energy—the energy of nonaggression and the energy of outrageousness.

Generally, outrageousness is a product of extending oneself: you can't contain yourself, therefore you become outrageous. You tend to spill over what you can't contain in your container. But that doesn't seem to be the case here. Outrageousness here is a sense of direct conviction, in which you feel intense humor, or intense energy and power, penetrating inside. Such outrageousness seems to be necessary, but it has to be accompanied by nonaggression. The question of nonaggression is based on whether you perceive your particular world in connection with glorifying your existence and your ego in the neurotic sense, or whether it is free from that.

That's very definite. But there seem to be mixed feelings in people's minds—inspiration is mixed with ego-centeredness. Somehow, that mixture tends to produce a sense of blindness in which you are unable to see the panoramic vision of a given situation, and consequently you are unable to act accordingly. So there's a problem with being self-centered, if there is aggression as well as self-consciousness. Self-consciousness alone doesn't seem to be a particularly big problem. In fact, sometimes there's room for being self-conscious: the constant checking, constant

reviewing, might be a source of further cynicism toward one's ego, which could be desirable. But definitely aggression is a big problem.

Aggression is based on wanting to demonstrate something that you know, wanting to tell somebody the truth you have discovered. Although your demonstration might be okay, even fantastic, and the truth you have discovered may be relevant, the means and way the whole thing is presented seems to be a problem. From that point of view, we can't have rules and regulations as to what to say and what not to say, how to act and how not to act, particularly. The whole thing has to be genuinely intuitive. The medium, or the style that we use in presenting the truth, seems to be the crux of the matter. In other words, an artist may be able to present his or her work of art precisely and thoroughly. But a work of art doesn't come out purely transparent, without personality. A work of art always has the smell, so to speak, or the feelings of whoever produced that particular work of art. For instance, the smell and feeling of that person could be extraordinarily aggressive. In that case, no matter what the actual representations may be, the person behind it has a lot of aggression, so more garbage is involved. The question of nonaggression is extremely important. Nonaggression makes art the art of dharma, or truth—real art. Such art has a sense of real simplicity, without any handles attached. We only want to exhibit our work of art, perform our work of art, or live with our work of art.

In a lot of art there is a tendency to try to capture a glimpse of one moment of experience and make it into a solid eternity. We have some brilliant idea and we try to make it into a piece of art. But that is captured art. We try to capture our artistic talent in a particular work of art—a piece of music, a painting, a poem. Until that work of art is forgotten or destroyed, it is stuck on a piece of paper or on a canvas or on a record that can be listened to over and over. It seems that such an attempt to solidify one's work of art, instead of giving birth to artistic talent, creates death for artistic talent.

We could shift our allegiance from death to life. In that case, art becomes a living continuity and is seen as a perpetual process. First somebody has an idea. The idea is presented in a very embryonic stage at the beginning. It begins as a seed, but then that embryonic essence begins to sprout and to make shoots. As it continues to develop and grow, it makes little flower buds. That concept of art is based on the idea of liv-

ing. The basic point is that there is a sense of continuity in your understanding of life.

If you know who you are, what you are, where you are, and you have something to say about that, you could share it with your fellow human beings. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as you don't want to publicize it. And even if you do want to publicize your embryonic discoveries, you don't spell out the whole thing at once. It is very tempting to spell everything out, which proves one's legitimacy, one's wisdom, or one's artistry. But according to the Buddhist tradition, in communicating with the world, particularly in the realm of art, the only thing you can do is hint, just give a basic headline. It depends on your attitude. If you want to demonstrate something very badly and you achieve that, then your work of art is a dead one. But if you present your work of art as a completely full message *without* spelling out every word of it, then you have just given the public a corner of what you might say. Therefore it is still fertile in people's minds and there is room for it to unfold. It is living art.

If you expound more than is necessary, it becomes apologetic. And it is boring because the audience begins to follow the logic while you are still standing on it. And you begin to pounce on it at the same time. I think the problem is that people are afraid they might be ignored, they might become failures, so they end up explaining everything they know, all the reference points at once. That attitude of poverty or failure makes your theater dirt, your poetry dirt. Usually the sense of something unsaid but implied makes more sense to people. It is not particularly holding back the truth, it is being honest and at the same time festive about what you have to say. Then art is a living process.

Nonaggression doesn't mean there is a regulation or cutting down of anything. Nonaggression is a product of awakened realization. You don't usually feel a sense of inhibition when you awake during the day from sleep. You just go about your everyday life, because awake and asleep are different. And of course you don't try to fall asleep in the middle of your activities during the day. But at the same time, you don't feel that you are inhibited from anything because you are not sleeping. Nonaggression is an organic process rather than a discipline or moral binding. Nonaggression is seeing through the aggression and realizing there are more ways to be active and efficient than being aggressive; it is realizing a new angle of energy.

In the case of meditation practice, either we do it at the simple, matter-of-fact level or we do it with a very meaningful religious or philosophical undertone. That undertone automatically becomes dogma and belief, and that belief becomes a very definite belief. Because that belief is very definite, therefore you should defend that belief. And defending that belief becomes aggression. The quality of outrageousness is the opposite of that—or the extension of that act without aggression. The definition of outrageousness is basically a sense of humor. In this case, humor is not particularly making fun and mocking somebody or something. Instead, it is an appreciative gesture. That is, things don't seem to be as heavy as we think they are, but they seem to be floating above the ground, and seemingly hilarious, funny, swift, and lucid.

At the same time, humor is not particularly casual or haphazard. The casual approach to life is often the result of being shy and feeling self-conscious and tense, so you would like to pass the buck or divert the attention to some other situation. But that also diverts the concentration of attitude and energy, so it is basically stupid rather than insightful. Humor is not like buying toys for your kids, which is somewhat lighthearted—unless the toy turns out to be extraordinarily expensive. And it is not at the level of the cheap world of plastics or teddy bears. It comes from delight and a sense of celebration. A sense of humor from that point of view is very transparent; at the same time, it is very definite. It has its own background and sanity.

Outrageousness is a question of being fearless in your celebration and your sense of humor. Sometimes it could be somewhat absurd and stubborn, but that seems to be the necessary eccentricity of this particular approach. Again, as long as it doesn't contain aggression and an exhibitionistic outlook, it seems to be quite simple. A sense of conviction brings fearlessness, outrageousness, and a sense of humor. And that basic sense of groundlessness and nonexistence brings up the question of aggression in the practice of art.

In dealing with aggression, we can't really separate ourselves into professional artists, amateur artists, and meditators. At the same time, somebody could be both a professional and an amateur artist and a meditator as well. Those areas are all related. Dharma art does not involve tricks or have to do with training artists in the Buddhist scheme. But our attitude toward art has to be expanded. This society in particular thrives

on pigeonholing everybody's style and discipline into categories, which becomes very clumsy and imprisoning.

You could try to continue your artwork and your meditation together, whatever you do in your life and whatever job you might have. I don't think you learn dharma art, you discover it; and you do not teach dharma art, but you set up an environment so it can be discovered. It's like preparing a nice meditation hall, with nice cushions to sit on, so it's inviting for you to sit and take part in meditation practice. The makers of the meditation hall and the cushions can't make you meditate, particularly—that's what you can do. And that is dharma art, it seems to me.

Wise Fool

We have to allow ourselves to realize that we are complete fools; otherwise, we have nowhere to begin. We have to be willing to be a fool and not always try to be a wise guy. We could almost say that being willing to be a fool is one of the first wisdoms.

IN ORDER TO EXPERIENCE some perspective on reality, we need to have a clear understanding, free from motivation, and also a sense of delight, or humor. Such an understanding of our perceptions only comes from a sense of nonterritoriality—that is to say, giving up ego's clinging, aggression, grasping, and all the rest of it. So there is a need for immense openness without frivolity, immense inquisitiveness without aggression.

Before we can perceive and understand the subtleties of visual dharma, or any subtleties that exist in our life in general, we must prepare ourselves properly. If we are not properly prepared, it will be quite dangerous to play games with the energies of life. The danger comes from doing things wrong, or possibly from doing things seemingly right, but at the wrong time. If we are not actually trying to make a connection with reality—properly, generously, and gently—then every move we might make in our life is wrong. Whether we are trying to move to a new apartment, another city, another state; trying to take up a new career or job; trying to develop a new interest in this or that—all those moves we might make seem to be successive disasters. Everything goes wrong, one thing after another, all the time. Something wrong is happening, but whom should we blame? We could say, "I'm under some kind of spell, black magic. I made an enemy of somebody somewhere a long time ago, and that person is trying to throw a curse on me. That's why things are going wrong." But that's not quite true. We would al-

ways like to have a scapegoat to blame for the phenomenal world, but by doing so, we only make ourselves more blind, more deaf, and more mute.

The phenomenal world is purely self-existing in nature; it does not take either praise or blame. It is self-existing, but if we fail to relate with the phenomenal world properly, something happens. Some kind of message comes to us which is not particularly organized by the people upstairs, but rather by the ground-floor people, ourselves. In other words, whatever direction we might take, we always need visual dharma. If we don't have true perception of visual dharma, a lot of things can go wrong.

On the one hand, there's the chicken-or-the-egg-first question. "In order to perceive visual dharma, don't we have to have an ideal situation first? Shouldn't something be done about that as well?" Seemingly there's no end to doing things wrong, messing things up all the time. And since we don't have a good starting point, nothing can go right. We are sort of trapped in that kind of negative "oy vey" situation. On the other hand, very interestingly, there is lots of room to make mistakes. That's true, absolutely true. But such room for mistakes cannot be created unless there is surrendering, giving, some kind of opening. It cannot take place if there's no basis for it. However, if there is some basis—if we can give away our aggression or attempt to give it away, if we attempt to open up and to strip away our territoriality and possessiveness—then there is lots of room for making mistakes. That doesn't necessarily mean there is room for dramatic mistakes, but lots of little dribbles of mistakes can take place, which usually occur in any case—we can't avoid it.

We have to allow ourselves to realize that we are complete fools; otherwise, we have nowhere to begin. We have to be willing to be a fool and not always try to be a wise guy. We could almost say that being willing to be a fool is one of the first wisdoms. So acknowledging foolishness is always a very important and powerful experience. The phenomenal world can be perceived and seen properly if we see it from the perspective of being a fool. There is very little distance between being a fool and being wise; they are extremely close. When we are really, truly fools, when we actually acknowledge our foolishness, then we are way ahead. We are not even in the process of becoming wise—we are already wise. Our journey generally takes place with that kind of shiftiness, in which everything overlaps. If we are taking the right direction in the

present step, then we are not so afraid to get into the next step. And that means that we are actually well advanced on the next step already, maybe halfway through.

The perception of visual dharma plays an extremely important part in how we run our lives. It is not about becoming a famous art collector with a great understanding of Tibetan iconography, but it has to do with how we can "improve" our life, so to speak. Improving does not mean competitiveness, trying to get better so we can outsmart the other wise guys. Instead, it is taking some responsibility for our life. We are not just saying, "Wow! Isn't that a nice full moon. Isn't that a nice autumn tree. Fantastic!"—and thinking that is practicing visual dharma. Somehow, that doesn't quite do it. It is too adolescent, we could almost say cheap. A lot of dignity is required. Such dignity comes from taking immense interest in the details of our life and from having a sense of appreciation that a lot of experiences are coming into our lives. That allows us to be solid, down to earth, and basically right. The visual perception of iconography and symbolism can occur without watching a slide show, without flipping through books, taking trips to museums, or buying and selling thangkas. If the Buddhist teaching makes sense, it should make sense on every level. Otherwise, it's as you say, "bullshit," and everything goes down the drain. How do we go about it so that it makes sense? Actually, we don't go about it at all. Instead, we could just *be*, very simply, and watch ourselves.

The passion, aggression, and ignorance that go on in our mind are the first set of iconography ever presented in Buddhist doctrine. The wheel of life is just a simple chart of our ordinary, everyday life—our domestic world, emotional world, economic world, and political world. It shows how things work very basically. So before we realize or understand—or even become just about to understand—anything at all, we have to have some understanding of how things begin on the kitchen-sink level. We have to understand the ordinary, basic, very mundane, extremely mundane, and maybe too-secular level. We have to begin beyond so-called religion.

If we have an iconographic understanding of the redness of our desire, the blackness of our aggression, and the grayness of our ignorance, then at least we can begin to see some of the patterns in our life. We can begin to understand how all this visualization takes place in our life, in our world. Those patterns are not just made-up patterns, but patterns

that exist in our heads, in our minds, in our hearts. From that, slowly and definitely, some kind of journey takes place. We are discovering and rediscovering and re-rediscovering ourselves all the time.

We might say, "What's so good about rediscovering ourselves? We know ourselves already. We're full of shit, not so good. We know that anyway." But we don't. That's precisely the point. We think we are sick, but we have no idea how sick we are. That's a problem. If we knew how sick we were, we would be on the way to advising the doctor as to what kind of treatment we should receive. Then some kind of positive step could be taken quite fearlessly and basically. It could be a gentle step. We don't have to exhaust ourselves in a panic just because we are sick, or because these things happen every day as recurring situations, and life is quite a drag. We can take things step by step. We can reorganize our lives according to our situation, and do it slowly and precisely.

As we go on, little pimples begin to burst in our lives, little uptightnesses begin to resolve, little bubbles of emotionalism begin to burst themselves into nowhere out of the openness, and things begin to cook. At a given point, we may experience that we are cooking too much or not cooking enough. But those problems are always arbitrary: when we are in a good mood, we think we are doing well, that we are well cooked; but when we are not doing so well, we feel we are undercooked, and things are getting sterile and stagnant. It goes on and on. Pros and cons and pros and cons, one after another, take place all the time, but they are not particularly a big deal. The important point is to wake ourselves up each time we are cooked, so to speak.

Humor and inquisitive mind are happening constantly. Sometimes the world becomes very bright, extraordinarily bright. The brightness and the articulation of the world seem to become a hang-up, and we are almost tempted to close our eyes and ears. But having failed in that, we still go on. And sometimes it's more a nuisance: the world becomes more of a nuisance, and the path becomes more of a nuisance as well. The whole journey is just driving us crazy—such a nuisance, such a problem. That's where the need for bravery comes in. If we begin to be brave, we will be able to see how phenomena work. That is to say, we will really *see* how phenomena work, rather than having an intellectual or case-history kind of understanding of phenomena. We will see how phenomena work, how the world works, how things operate in our lives. At that point, experience becomes very penetrating. Some kinds of

understanding or realization are hard to take, but we need to push further, to take an immense leap all the time. We need very much to take that kind of leap. Sometimes, looking back, we wonder why we are doing all this, and sometimes we think, why not? Sometimes there is no choice, and sometimes there is a choice, but we would like to find some contrast to that choice. So we have all kinds of relationships to the path, almost love affairs.

This particular journey is not a very easy one, absolutely not easy at all. It demands a lot from us. There's so much demand, but at the same time, some element of gentleness begins to arise in us. We might say we become carefree, but that does not necessarily mean being devoid of responsibility. We begin to realize that life is quite rich, apart from the complaints—and even the complaints seem to be quite colorful. We begin to pick up percolating bubbles here and there, which begin to crack up, and we begin to find that after all, maybe life is worth celebrating. Something is taking place; no complaints need to be made at this point. Everything is churning up and processing through all along. Something is definitely beginning to take place, which is pleasant—not particularly pleasurable, but pleasant. And why not? It makes sense, although that's not the point.

We actually feel it, we actually experience it. There's something very humorous and delightful about the whole thing. But once more, the clarity begins to become an irritating problem. More and more bright visions come to our heads, which doesn't mean we begin to see bunny rabbits or Jehovah riding on a cat. The bright vision I am talking about is the experience of redness, the experience of blueness, the experience of greenness, the experience of yellowness. It includes all the perceptual levels of phenomenal experience, rather than vision alone. Our life becomes worthwhile. We begin to appreciate something or other, although we still do not know exactly what. And somehow, even trying to find out whether we know anything about it doesn't seem to be a problem.

However, in the back of our minds, there may be some kind of problem: we may come along and actually want to find something out. And we may not find what we want, absolutely not. Our questions may not be answered one by one. But something else is taking place. Maybe the question mark itself is beginning to rot, become disheveled, and

turn into a period, full stop. Maybe that is happening. It's a possibility. And that seems to be the process of the whole journey: dissolving the question mark into a full stop. The question mark becomes a statement or an exclamation, rather than a hollow line longing to be filled by answers.

Five Styles of Creative Expression

You could work with the five buddha family principles by picking up a piece of stone or a twig and approaching it from each of its five different aspects. With each family, a whole different perspective will begin to develop.

IN DISCUSSING GENERAL aesthetic appreciation and creative work, I would like to discuss five styles, traditionally known as the five buddha families. By working with the five buddha families, we are trying to develop some basic understanding of how to see things in their absolute essence, their own innate nature. We can use this knowledge with regard to painting or poetry or arranging flowers or making films or composing music. It is also connected with relationships between people. The five buddha family principles seem to cover a whole new dimension of perception. They are very important at all levels of perception and in all creative situations.

In tantric iconography, the five buddha families are arrayed in the center and the four cardinal points of a mandala. The *buddha* family is in the center. It is the basic coordinate, basic wisdom, and is symbolized by a wheel and the color blue. *Vajra* is in the east and is connected with the dawn. It is symbolized by the color white and by the vajra scepter.* It is the sharpness of experience, as in the morning when we wake up. *Ratna* is in the south. It is associated with richness and is symbolized by a jewel and the color yellow. Ratna is connected with midday, when we begin to need refreshment and nourishment. *Padma* is in the west and is symbolized by the lotus and the color red. As our day grows older, we relate

*Editor's note: Sometimes the colors of these two families are reversed, in which case buddha is associated with white and vajra with blue.

with recruiting a lover. It is time to socialize. Or, if we have fallen in love with an antique or with some clothing, it is time to go out and buy it. The last family is *karma,* in the north. It is symbolized by a sword and the color green. Finally we have captured the whole situation: we have everything we need, and there is nothing more to get. So the mandala of the five buddha families represents the progress of a whole day or a whole course of action. We won't go through the philosophy; we'll start with the functions of these five principles and their association with composition. There are so many things to say about them, but basically vajra is white and water; ratna is yellow and earth; padma is red and fire; buddha is blue and space or sky; karma is green and wind.

Buddha is in the middle and, being in the middle, is the foundation or the basic ground. This basic ground is usually rather dull because it is too solid. We might have to dig it up and put concrete there, since it is rather uninteresting as it is. It will be interesting only if we know we are going to construct something on it.

Buddha is in the middle because it is the foundation rather than because it is the most important. Buddha could also be the environment, or the oxygen that makes it possible for the other principles to function. It has that sedate, solid quality. In terms of visuals, it is the uninteresting part, the waiting for something to happen. Often the buddha quality is necessary to create contrast between the other colorful types: vajra, ratna, padma, and karma. We need buddha as the moderator, so to speak.

Buddha is somewhat desolate, too spacious. It is like visiting a campsite where only the stones from old campfires are left. There's a sense of its having been inhabited for a long time, but for the time being, no one is there. The inhabitants were not killed; it wasn't a violent move—they just had to leave the place. It's like the caves where Indians used to live, or like the caves in France with the prehistoric paintings. There is a sense of the past, but at the same time it has no particular characteristics. It is very dull, quite possibly in the plains, very flat. Buddha is connected with the color blue. Buddha family art is simple and unobtrusive. It is very direct, but very simple. The buddha family artist tends to use a medium that is heavy and the color black or blue.

Vajra is the sense of sharpness, precision. The color of vajra is white. It is cold and desolate, because everything has to be analyzed in its own terms. Vajra expression deals with objects on their own merits. It never

leaves any space, never neglects anything. Vajra is winter, white, austere. Black and white. For example, the ground has its own way of freezing, and trees and plants have their way of freezing. The ground carries the snowfall in a distinctive way. Trees, on the other hand, have an entirely different way of carrying snow, depending on whether their leaves have fallen off or they are evergreens. Vajra is very cold and desolate, but it is also sharp and precise. It requires a lot of focusing.

Vajra is the cold and desolate winter landscape, but less hostile than the karma family. Ingmar Bergman's movies are very vajra. He gets the all-pervasive winter quality, the sharp quality like a winter morning, crystal clear, icicles sharp and precise. But it's not completely desolate; there are lots of things to be intrigued by. It's not empty, but full of all sorts of thought-provoking sharpness. Vajra is connected with the east, the dawn, the morning. It has a sharp silver quality, the morning-star quality.

Vajra art is white, with maybe a suggestion of gold or blue. Sculpturally, it would be metallic, possibly aluminum. It could be destructive art, like a machine built in such a way that it destroys itself—the machine goes beep, beep, beep and then just does its number. If it is painting, it is waterlike and not necessarily representational.

Ratna is related with autumn, fertility, richness. It is richness in the sense of pure restlessness. Trees must bear fruit to be an orchard, for instance. When the fruit is ripe and completely rich, it automatically falls to the ground asking to be eaten up. Ratna has a kind of giving-away quality. It is luscious and extraordinarily rich and open.

Ratna has the quality of midmorning. It is very colorful, but predominantly yellow, connected with the sun's rays and with gold. Whereas vajra is connected with crystal, ratna is connected with the richness of gold, amber, saffron. It has a sense of depth, real earthiness rather than texture. In comparison, vajra is purely texture and has a crispy quality rather than fundamental depth. Ratna is very solid and earthy, but it is not as earthy as buddha, which is dull earthy, uninteresting earthy. Ratna is earthy because it is rich. It is ripe and earthy, like a gigantic tree that falls to the ground and begins to rot and grow mushrooms all over it and is enriched by all kinds of weeds growing around it. There is a sense that animals could nest in that big log. Its color begins to turn yellow, and its bark begins to peel off to show the inside of the tree, which is very rich and very solid and definite. If you decided to take it away and

use it as part of a garden arrangement, it would be impossible because it would crumble, fall apart. It would be too heavy to carry, anyway.

Ratna is very rich, yellow, gold. Ratna painting tends to be the least successful, because people overdo it, like a portrait on gold or an overdone flower. Ratna art should be rich, crisp, and powerful; dignified, opulent, and regal.

Padma is connected with the color red and with the spring season. The harshness of winter is just about to become softened by the expectation of summer. Even the harshness of ice is softened when snowflakes begin to become soggy snowflakes. It is the meeting of the two seasons, so it has a halfway-through quality. From that point of view, spring is quite unlike autumn, which has definite qualities of ripening and developing things.

Padma is very much connected with facade. It has no feeling of solidity or texture but is purely concerned with colors, the glamorous qualities. Padma is concerned with output rather than input. In regard to its health or fundamental survival, padma is not concerned with a survival mentality at all. Thus it is connected with sunset. The visual quality of a reflection is more important than its being, so padma is involved with art rather than science or practicality.

Padma is a reasonable location, a place where wildflowers can grow, a perfect place to have animals roaming about. It is like a highland plateau in Tibet at lambing season, with lambs prancing about and eating wildflowers. There are herbs; it is filled with thyme. Padma is a place of meadows. There are gentle rocks, not intrusive, suitable for young animals to play among.

Padma is often misinterpreted as sweet or beautiful, like pop art or Indian posters, kind of overdecorated with beauty and seductive. But that seems to be misleading. True padma art is very luscious and colorful, absolutely brilliant color. It also has curves and shapes. One stroke of color doesn't make your mind interested in it, but padma art has curves, like a lotus.

Karma, strangely enough, is connected with summer. It is the efficiency of karma that connects it with summer. In summer everything is active, everything is growing. There are all kinds of insects, all kinds of discomforting things, all kinds of activities going on, all kinds of growth. During the summer, there are thunderstorms and hailstorms. There is a sense that you are never left to enjoy the summer; something is always

moving in order to maintain itself. It's a bit like late spring, but it is more fertile, because it sees that things are fulfilled at the right moment. The color of karma is green. The feeling of karma is like after sunset: late in the day, dusk, and early night. Whereas ratna has tremendous confidence, the karma of the summer is still competing, trying to give birth.

Karma art is the worst, demonic and black. A black panther is an example of karma art. It is not destruction alone, but more like trying to understand the meaning of a thundercloud. The cloud that comes before a thunderstorm has a quality of potential destruction or threat.

The five buddha families are associated with colors, elements, landscapes, directions, seasons—with any aspect of the phenomenal world, as well as describing people's individual styles. In describing people's styles, each family is associated with both a neurotic and an enlightened style. The neurotic expression of any buddha family can be transmuted into its wisdom or enlightened aspect. Buddha neurosis is the quality of being spaced out rather than spacious. It is often associated with an unwillingness to express oneself. Another quality of buddha neurosis is that we couldn't be bothered, we just sit there. The neurotic expression of vajra is anger and intellectual fixation. If we become fixated on a particular logic, the sharpness of vajra can become rigidity. In the neurotic sense, the richness of ratna manifests as being completely fat, extraordinarily ostentatious. We expand constantly and indulge ourselves to the level of insanity. Padma neurosis is connected with passion, a grasping quality, a desire to possess. We are completely wrapped up in desire and want only to seduce the world, without concern for real communication. The neurotic quality of karma is connected with jealousy, comparison, and envy. There are also five wisdoms that go with the five families. Buddha wisdom is all-encompassing spaciousness. Vajra wisdom is clear and precise, like reflections in a mirror or reflecting pool. Ratna wisdom is equanimity; it is expansive, extending. Padma wisdom is discriminating, seeing the details of things. Karma wisdom is the automatic fulfillment of all actions.

You could work with the five buddha family principles by picking up a piece of stone or a twig and approaching it from each of its five different aspects. With each family, a whole different perspective will begin to develop. At that point, you have limitless resources. You don't feel obliged to produce ever more materials, because you can take one thing and make it vajra, karma, padma, ratna, or buddha. You can make all kinds of tartan plaids out of that.

Nobody's World

There are three types of perception: the sense of experience, the sense of emptiness, and the sense of luminosity. With those three levels of perception, we are able to see all the patterns of our life. Whether the patterns of our life are regarded as neurotic or enlightened, we are able to see them very clearly.

IN RELATING WITH the world, there are some very tough questions: what is the world, whose world is it, and what does relating mean? The basic point is that this is nobody's world, since there is nobody as such. The energy that is constantly taking place does not belong to anybody but is a natural, organic process. Nevertheless, we function as if the world does belong to us, as if I have myself, as if I do exist. From this point of view, the nonexistence of ego—that primordial state of thisness or solid fixation—is not a philosophical matter, but simply a matter of perception. Perception is unable to trace back its existence to its origin. So each perception becomes sheer energy, without a beginner of the perception and without substance—just simple perception.

Perception can be categorized into three levels: experience, emptiness, and luminosity. At the first level, experience, perception is not meaningful self-confirmation, but the experience of things as they are. White is white and black is black. There is a kind of exuberant energy that goes along with the perception. You actually experience something as though you were it. You and the experience become almost indivisible when you experience something in that way. It's that kind of direct communication without anything between.

The second level is the perception of emptiness, which is the absence of things as they are. That is, things have their space; they always come with a certain sense of room. Despite the complexities or the overcrowd-

edness of our experience, things provide their own space within the overcrowdedness. Actually, that is saying the same thing: overcrowdedness *is* room, in some sense, because there is movement, dance, play. Things are very shifty and intangible. Because of that, there is a very lucid aspect to the whole thing.

The third level of perception is luminosity. Luminosity has nothing to do with any visually bright light but is a sense of sharp boundary and clarity that does not have a theoretical or intellectualized reference point. It is realized on the spot, within the spaciousness. If there were no space, it would be unfocused; there would be no sharpness. But at this third level, in terms of ordinary experience, we have a sense of clarity and a sense of things as they are seen as they are, unmistakably.

So there are three types of perception: the sense of experience, the sense of emptiness, and the sense of luminosity. With those three levels of perception, we are able to see all the patterns of our life. Whether the patterns of our life are regarded as neurotic or enlightened, we are able to see them very clearly. That seems to be the beginning of a glimpse of the mandala perspective and the beginning of a glimpse of the five buddha family energies.

The five buddha energies are not bound to the enlightened state alone; they contain the confused state as well. The point is to see them as they are: thoroughly confused, neurotic, and painful, or extraordinarily pleasurable, expansive, humorous, and joyous. So we are not trying to remove what we perceive, particularly, and we are not trying to reshape the world in the fashion we'd like to see it. We are seeing the world as it is, without reshaping. And whatever comes along in us is a part of the five buddha family principles and the mandala setup.

I would like to remind you that this is a purely experiential approach. We are not talking about philosophy: "Does this thing exist or not?" "Is this a conceptual-level phenomenological experience?" We are not talking about such things. In many cases, the philosophers have gone wrong, so to speak: they have tried to find out the truth about things as they are without experiencing what things as they are might be at the perceptual level. With that approach, we find ourselves completely theorizing the whole thing, without actually knowing what experience we might have.

If we begin to theorize about the existence of the world, its solidity, its eternity, or whatever, we are blocking out a very large chunk of our experience. We are trying to prove too much and trying to build a foun-

dation too much. We are concerned with the solidity of the foundation rather than with its relationship to earth. That seems to be the wrong approach, even to metaphysics. But in this case we are not talking about metaphysics. This is the experiential level, that which we experience in our everyday lives. Such experience doesn't have to be confirmed by theory or by proof. It does not depend on anything of that nature. Instead, it is just simply a matter of everyday life experience from minute to minute. It does not involve any long-term project.

The question of perception becomes very important, because perceptions can't be packed down into a solid basis. Perceptions are very shifty, and they continuously float in and out of our life. You might say, "I have seen a beautiful formation of clouds over the Himalayas," but that doesn't mean that such clouds will always be there. Even though they may be part of the attributes of the Himalayas, you wouldn't expect that when you went to the Himalayas you would always see such beautiful clouds. You might arrive there in the middle of the night under completely clear skies. The idea is that when you describe an experience and relay it to somebody else, whatever you perceive at that moment sounds extremely full, vivid, and fantastic. Somehow you manage to relay the experience of the moment. But if you try to recapture the whole thing or to mimic it, it is impossible. You might end up philosophizing, going further and further from the realities, whatever they might be.

There's a sharp precision that exists in our life, which generally arises from some form of training or discipline, the sitting practice of meditation in particular. It's not that meditation sharpens our perceptions, but that sitting practice makes it possible to perceive. It's a question of removing the clouds, rather than recreating the sun. That seems to be the whole point. An experience of reality may seem to be very uncertain and very faint, but however faint it may be, it still is sharp and precise and tends to bring a lot of clarity.

On the whole, such precise perception depends on a level of watchfulness. Watchfulness is not being careful or tiptoeing about; rather, watchfulness is experiencing a sudden glimpse of something without any qualifications—just the sudden glimpse itself. That has become a problem or an enigmatic question. We ask, "A sudden glimpse of what?" If we have nothing to say regarding what it is, then the whole thing must be absurd. But if we could change our thinking style entirely and open our minds toward something slightly more than what we have and what

we have been taught, then we could step beyond that level where everything is based on business transactions and profit making. There is a possibility of awareness without any conditions. From this point of view, *conditions* means anything you use to get out of the awareness or steal from it. So awareness without conditions is just simple, straightforward awareness of itself, awareness being aware without putting anything into it.

That kind of perception seems to be the only key point. It is the key perspective or microscope that is able to perceive the three types of perceptions. At that level, the mandala spectrum and the five buddha family principles are no big deal. They are not extraordinary things to perceive, but matter-of-fact. The basic mandala principle becomes very simple: it is that everything is related to everything else. It is quite simple and straightforward.

Choiceless Magic

We are ready for a firsthand account of what's going on, rather than just listening to stories. Whether we are going to be in Jerusalem next year, the next seder, tomorrow, or the next hour doesn't really matter—the only thing that matters is whether Jerusalem exists now, at this very moment.

I WOULD LIKE TO discuss the question of magic. Different perspectives on the world make for different understandings of the functioning of phenomena. That seems to be a natural problem or natural working basis. From that basis, we try to find some common ground in which we could work together, by relying on basic principles such as body, speech, and mind; white, black, red, blue, green; heaven and earth; and all the rest of it.

Those personal expressions that take place in our life, like falling in love or being extremely angry with somebody, are fantastic ground to work with. But that ground has not been developed properly and completely. We reject individual fashions of realization, our particular styles. And on that basis, we try to reject or accept the potentiality and possibilities of being suckered into spiritual trips of all kinds.

People say we are all one and talk about the universality of power. But all that is an expression of frustration, based on not being able to accept their individuality. Because of that, they would like to conform themselves to some large body. When poets are having difficulty creating a poem, they write about the sun and the moon, the earth, or national disasters, things that are seemingly somewhat common. But it is very difficult to get hold of one's individuality; people find that very difficult. Spiritually or otherwise, we do not trust our individuality, and that is one of our biggest problems. We would prefer a monolithic figure, a

monolithic governing principle. We use theistic terms like "Our Maker," to refer to one person, one big granddaddy. And if we have problems relating to that person, we should try harder; we must not give up.

The problem with that approach is that our individuality is completely neglected. That doesn't mean we should indulge our personal trips, but there should be some awareness that we are all different. We are all basically, intrinsically different. Our fathers, mothers, children, and great-great-grandparents are different from us, and we are even different from ourselves, from that point of view. So there is an awareness of individuality.

Whenever there is a break from conventionally accepted channels of thought, we get frightened. If we break the law, for example, we might be put in an extremely unpleasant situation psychologically or physically. We do not accept our individuality. We would prefer to have a preprepared menu or a travel guide so that we could take the journey without being hassled by our own individuality. But that is problematic: with that approach, magic cannot exist. We simply try to relate with some common factor, the general principles given to us. And we have our ideas of this and that, so we might be included and our ideas proclaimed as part of the categories in that general statement, rather than applying to us. There's a lot of cowardice taking place. That seems to be a general problem with our state of mind, state of being.

Individuality is quite tricky. When individuality exists, as what we are, there is a sense of confusion, uncertainty, and chaos. But there's more room to explore the world and experience the given world and its relationship to ourselves personally. We are individual entities who express reality in our own ways. When you see white, it may not be the same white as the editors of my life assume you should perceive as white. And when you see red, it is the same thing. From that point of view, nobody has the right to commit you to the loony bin if your perceptions don't fit into the general categories according to the books. There is a lot of room for that kind of perspective.

Perceptions are not governed by one statement alone, but by individuals reacting to the basic elements. When individuals react to air, water, fire, space, or earth, they have different responses. Individually, they have different perspectives on all that. Those differences do not become uniform at all—they are ongoing. The magic lies in that individuality. We are relating individually to all kinds of basic things in life that we

seemingly share. But we have no idea, exactly. None of us has had a chance to tell each other precisely what our perception of water is like. We could use all kinds of words and ideas and concepts and terms, but that still would not make it clear. They would be somebody else's concepts.

When great artists leave their works of art behind—writings or pictures or music—we feel we are in contact with such people, but we actually have no idea. If they were to come back to life, they might be insulted or even horrified by our understanding of their work. So the spark, or magic, lies in individuality, rather than uniformity. It is not that we count down to zero and then levitate all together, or turn the world upside down. That would be a comic-strip version of magic. And if a group of individuals commit themselves to an organization, and suddenly everybody gets high, turned on, that is like a living comic strip. It's very funny, but there's a great neglect of individuality.

In many cases, we try to avoid our individuality and instead emulate something else. That is a big problem. Individuality sometimes comes out of ego, like wanting to be an emperor, a king, or a millionaire. But individuality can also come from personal inspiration. It depends on the level of one's journey, on how far you have been able to shed your ego. We all have our own style and our own particular nature. We can't avoid it. That would be like asking Avalokiteshvara, who is the embodiment of the padma principle of compassion, suddenly to become a ratna person. The enlightened expression of yourself is in accord with your inherent nature.

The same principle applies to your experience of your own life, in terms of visual perception and your understanding of iconography. There is a basic iconographic pattern in the universe, like the existence of the seasons and the elements, but how we react to that is individual. The path of buddhadharma does not try to unify everything and reduce everyone to good little tantric robots. The intent is to heighten individuality, but within the framework of some common world. Such a framework is actually very questionable at this point, although it performs in that way. In the end, all barriers are broken through and bondages annihilated. At that point, there is room for *that* and *this* to be one. But that takes a lot of steps, a lot of time, effort, and discipline.

The phenomenal world is your own world. Therefore, we cannot say that this phenomenal world is always predictable, that when I see blue

you must also see blue. Maybe your sense of blue is more like my sense of red. It could seem that we are agreeing: "Oh, yes, that's a blue light. This one is a red light." But who knows? Nobody knows. So let us not make the psychological assumption that everything is secure. Perceptions are entirely different from this point of view, much beyond the level of seeing blue or not. I know this idea is very frightening and threatening—but let it be threatening. Even your version of being threatened may be entirely different from my version of being threatened. We might be using the same word but in the final realization come up with completely different ideas. There is no point in comparing our worlds. No reference point is necessary. That seems to be simply wasting our energy.

I am afraid what we are discussing is rather dull. It is not quite the same as taking a journey to Peru and seeing the Indians in the Andes or visiting the Tibetans in the Himalayas. Such things have an extra kick, like opium. But we have got to get back to basics sooner or later—the sooner the better. The more entangled we get, the more problems we find. It is like an ingrown toenail: as the nail grows into the toe more and more, finally the whole leg has to be amputated. We don't want to get to that point, so an early warning is best—years ahead, rather than five minutes. Such an early warning system is the duty of somebody who speaks for the teachings.

Getting back to this world of ours, it is not particularly attractive, exciting, and fantastic. It's okay, or maybe it is terrible; I can't speak for everyone. But on the whole, this world is a very anxious one. Whether you are happy or sad, whether you are exuberantly joyful or miserable, it's still an anxious world we're living in. According to Buddhist tradition, anxieties can be transformed into mindfulness and awareness. Anxiety itself can be a reminder, a nudge that keeps waking us up again and again. It's up to us whether we try to get rid of that reminder and make everything smooth, beautiful, and fantastic, or whether we try to make the world into a training ground to learn more, which I suggest is preferable.

We are working with iconography as a journey, rather than as entertainment or excitement or cultural fascination. In attempting to understand iconography, one possibility is to view the whole thing as very sacred. If we manage to see all the little details, we might be saved some day, because the merit of what we see could be a source of deliverance.

Another possibility is that by understanding iconography, we might be able to figure out the psychological geography of the Buddhist tradition of how to develop freedom. But both of those approaches seem to be a waste of time. We are not talking about merit or freedom, but about personal experience—how we can actually see this world, how we can live better, if you like. It is not so goal oriented, but it is about how we can live properly right now. How can we live our lives with all the garbage and rubbish that exist around us, amid all kinds of hustle and bustle and threats on our life, hassled by our kids and our parents, threatened by rent problems and money problems? How can we make all that into visual dharma? That seems to be the point. So visual dharma does not mean making everything fantastic, but making something actually happen. It is not a greater Disneyland. By the way, I think Disneyland is one of the best things America has produced. It shows the mirage quality of life and the many different ways one can be amused and entertained. People go to Disneyland and take it very casually, as a day off. "We are doing something for the kids." That's not true; you do it for yourself. It's just like Sesame Street—the parents watch it more than the kids do.

Magic in this case is power. Not power over others, but power beyond "over others." It is the power within oneself. You have enough strength and exertion and energy to view things as they are, personally, properly, and directly. You have the chance to experience the brightness of life and the haziness of life, which is also a source of power. The fantastically sharp-edged quality of life can be experienced personally and directly. There is a powerful sense of perception available to you. And it is realistic, as far as your notion of reality goes. You begin to find some footholds or stirrups, so you can ride and climb much better, so that when you climb a mountain you are not committing suicide. And you don't distort the teachings through little twists of logic. It applies to you personally and it actually works. In contrast, the magical power of a magic show is purely a children's game, in which we only want to prove that some kind of supernormal power exists. Maybe it does and maybe it doesn't, but that approach seems to be for the birds.

The visual setup is always unique, shifty. It's not that visual objects themselves shift, but the individual perceiver's mind shifts constantly. So the whole thing has to be clipped together. Some of those visual shifts become deadly ones—black magic, if you'd like to call it that. If you take the attitude of self-destruction and ego, then visual or auditory percep-

tion becomes destructive because your relationship to it is based on your aggression. But that aggression bounces back on you, and you yourself become the victim. On the other hand, visual perception can be creative and open, the most powerful perception of all. It can be realistic and powerful and clear. And when extreme clarity takes place, that also brings a sense of humor.

When you click in to the iconography of the cosmos, you are able to experience a sense of reality that does not depend on reinforcement. You don't have to ask your neighbor, "Am I seeing reality?" The experience is unconditional. Nobody has to confirm your experience—you can confirm it yourself. If you confirmed yourself constantly, heavy-handedly, that would be like incest, but in this case, the self-confirmation is just right. It's like sipping, tasting, swallowing, and digesting properly. This is the visual and auditory perceptual world of magic we experience.

It is not true that there is no magic these days, that we are in the dark ages. A lot of people say that we are too late, we have lost our chance, so we need to wait for some savior to turn up. The only thing we can do is hope for something in the future or emulate people from the past, since presently nobody is getting into anything at all and the whole world has become flat. A lot of people are frustrated; therefore, they have to say such things. It is quite true for them; they are speaking on their own behalf. Such people say that enlightenment has not existed since the time of the Buddha. These days nobody attains enlightenment. And some people say that the next enlightenment plague might take place in another five hundred years, but not now. So the only thing we can do now is pray to be reborn at the right time. We'd better be good boys and girls in order to be candidates for that.

A similar approach, of either a past orientation or a future orientation, takes place in Christianity. But somehow, that whole approach is becoming old hat. Gimmicks are invented right and left to convince us, but we are not quite convinced. We are ready for a firsthand account of what's going on, rather than just listening to stories. Whether we are going to be in Jerusalem next year, the next seder, tomorrow, or the next hour doesn't really matter—the only thing that matters is whether Jerusalem exists now, at this very moment! This is not an emergency, but having a sense of precision. It is a direct understanding that this world of ours is not a future-oriented world or a past-oriented world. It is neither that once we've been saved this world is going to be ours, nor

that if we become like past good people, we will have the privilege of using their leftovers. This world of ours is personal, real, and direct. Iconography exists in that real world, which seems to be the most magical one of all.

The only magic that exists is this life, this world, the particular phenomena we are all experiencing right this moment. Right now, right here, you are in this magic. For instance, in giving this talk, I am a captive speaker and you are a captive audience. We can't just walk out in the middle of a sentence—if we were to try to do that, the implications would linger with us for a long time. So we cannot wipe out our past, present, or future. Magic is direct and personal and lingers in our state of being. It is choiceless magic.

One Stroke

Flower arranging and making a brush stroke are unique and absolutely real. You could actually sum up the history of your life in one stroke—that's possible.

INDIVIDUAL EXPRESSIONS are cultural expressions at the same time. But to begin with, you really have to understand culture. Otherwise it would be like showing a grandmother how to suck an egg or, as we say in Tibet, trying to teach Karmapa the alphabet. A big problem in this country is that people think culture is outside of them. You have American culture, you have a man on the moon, and all kinds of things that are not you but are cultural. Eating hamburgers and hot dogs is cultural, but you personally may not like them. We have been distorting the distinction between ourselves and culture in this country. But truly speaking, culture is a personal experience; culture is made out of a lot of people, all behaving the same way. Everybody wears shirts and pants, and everybody has a zipper in his fly. That is a cultural thing—but at the same time it's personal: you need that zipper to zip up! So we really can't separate cultural and individual from that point of view, particularly in a work of art. You might paint something Americanized; somebody else might paint something Oriental, but the Oriental and Occidental distinction doesn't apply at this point. Culture is how you behave, how you've been told to behave: the transmission from your parents and your friends and how you carry that out. So a work of art cannot be said to be purely cultural or purely individual.

There are two distinct types of Buddhist art, we could say quite safely: that which is purely cultural and that which is basically noncultural. The purely cultural includes ancient sculptures and paintings and architectural designs based on traditional themes. Traditional Buddhist

art originated in India at the time of Emperor Ashoka. It includes Chinese and Japanese Buddhist art, Southeast Asian art, and Tibetan art, which is basically an amalgamation of Indian classical art with some Chinese elements. But no matter which country it is from, or whether it is modern or ancient, traditional Buddhist art is much the same in its approach, although the cultural expressions vary. Basically it depicts the Buddha or various types of buddhas, the various lifestyles of the Buddha and other great teachers and their social setups, honoring teachers by means of different thrones, different foregrounds, and different backgrounds. The teachers are surrounded by various disciples, who are equally highly thought-of people, by flying goddesses, and by animals roaming quietly in the background. The sun and moon are shining, and so forth.

The second type of Buddhist art, which developed out of those traditional forms, is basically noncultural. It is a direct aesthetic expression of meditation and devotion. Some sense of faith and trust can be presented in such works of art. For instance, at the Ajanta and Ellora caves in India, built during the reign of Emperor Ashoka, a freestanding temple was built from a huge rocky mountain: the mountain was carved out into rooms and doorways and pillars. It was not particularly meant to be monumental, but it was built functionally. Seeing a gigantic rocky mountain as material to carve temples and statues out of is something like seeing a sheet of paper or canvas in front of you as material to make pictures out of. But the inspiration seems to be at a different level. Nowadays people's inspiration is smaller. If somebody wanted to carve a whole mountain into a temple, people would obviously regard that person as being on a trip, not only because of the costs, but also because of the unreasonability of such an idea. However, I don't think that is a sign of degeneration, particularly. We mustn't think of ourselves as less enlightened and the people of those days as more enlightened. I think it is a cultural change. The human world is becoming more refined, in the sense that we pay more attention to comfort and luxury. We are becoming less hard, and the things around us are easier to handle. Nevertheless, that monumental aspect of art is always present in the noncultural approach. And that noncultural approach to art comes from the sitting practice of meditation.

Once the practice of meditation is developed and you begin to see yourself clearly, then you also begin to see your environment clearly.

You don't have to be labeled an artistic person, necessarily; anyone can work on that kind of perception. The only obstacles are hesitation and lack of interest. The sitting practice of meditation allows a sense of solidness and a sense of slowness and the possibility of watching one's mind operating all the time. Out of that, a sense of expansion slowly begins to develop and, at the same time, the awareness that you have been missing a lot of things in your life. You have been too busy to look for them or see them or appreciate them. So as you begin to meditate, you become more perceptive. Your mind becomes clearer and clearer, like an immaculate microscope lens.

Out of that clarity, various styles of perception begin to develop, which are the styles of the five buddha families. So artistic expression develops from meditation. To be an artist, one needs mental training through the practice of meditation. That mental training automatically brings with it physical training. That is, when the mind begins to function in a more relaxed way, that is reflected in one's body. Then one begins to develop a sense of humor and appreciation as well. With such clarity, nothing can be distorted.

We're always fascinated with something in the beginning, and we would like to cultivate that fascination and brew it and drink it until we get intoxicated. That is an obvious problem. In order for art to be certain and definite and workable, I would say that you definitely need sitting practice as basic pre–art training. It's the only way to make sure that you don't distort. Nowadays, students don't have an apprentice-teacher relationship with a great master artist. You may study with somebody, take a course, but that person doesn't live with you and work with you throughout your growth. Because of that lack, the only way to become an artist is to meditate a lot. Then you begin to develop a sense of continuity, a sense of dignity and mindfulness.

You could express that dignity and mindfulness in whatever you do, but in a work of art the whole thing is very condensed. For instance, flower arranging and making a brush stroke are unique and absolutely real. You could actually sum up the history of your life in one stroke—that's possible. In your life in general, you never make such a comment as you make in one stroke of the brush, in one flower arrangement, or in one line of poetry. Those are actual statements. They are not very important on their own, but for what they represent. As such, they are very strong and powerful.

When we first perceive things, everything is uncertain. Because of that, we tend to refer back to subconscious preconceptions. That's precisely what preconception is: before we perceive something, we already have some idea. So in viewing the world, we rely on preconceptions. That is also how we begin to create a picture. And once that happens, we begin to feel very confident: "Oh boy, now I have something to work on. Finally I am saved. Phew!" Usually people don't like to show their initial blankness. Particularly people who are highly trained or have studied too much philosophy or have become too involved with the professional world would like to hide that blankness. But that blankness is the basic ground.

Genuine inspiration is not particularly dramatic. It's very ordinary. It comes from settling down in your environment and accepting situations as natural. Out of that you begin to realize that you can dance with them. So inspiration comes from acceptance rather than from having a sudden flash of good gimmick coming up in your mind. Natural inspiration is simply having something somewhere that you can relate with, so it has a sense of stableness and solidity. Inspiration has two parts: openness and clear vision, or in Sanskrit, *shunyata* and *prajna*. Both are based on the notion of original mind, traditionally known as buddha mind, which is blank, nonterritorial, noncompetitive, and open.

The Activity of Nonaggression

Nonaggression is the key to life, and to perception altogether. It is how to perceive reality at its best.

NONAGGRESSION IS THE key to life, and to perception altogether. It is how to perceive reality at its best. Out of that comes the notion of dignity. Dignity is somewhat more than elegance, which could be genteel in fashion. Dignity has a sense of authentic presence: it has authenticity; therefore it has presence. From that authentic presence, which comes out of nonaggression and gentleness, comes action. And from that, what is known as the four actions take place. According to the vajrayana tradition, these four basic actions are called the four karmas. They have to do with our experience of reality and our perception of art altogether—our perception of life, in this case.

The first action has a sense of pure perception without sharp edges. It is related with the color blue, and also related with the circle, as opposed to a square or other shape. The round shape of the circle represents gentleness and innate goodness, which is absent of neurosis. Blue is like a pure sky and represents space. Blue is also related with the air: cold, fresh air. Altogether, being without sharp edges has a sense of seeing the world at its best. This is the first karma, which is the principle of peace, or pacifying.

The second action has a sense of richness. It is usually depicted as a yellow square with sharp corners. The richness and yellowness are related with the earth. Since the earth is always creating boundaries for us, therefore it is depicted as a square. It also has lots of corners, or directions: namely east, south, west, and north. This action has a sense of being, harmony, a well-settled situation. It is the idea of dignity, or in

Tibetan, *ziji*. The second karma, enriching, is the intrinsic energy of our state of mind.

The third manifestation of action is usually depicted as a red half-circle. The redness represents the notion of having a connection with the emotions of that square earth. So the square earth is not all that square; it has its reference points. As to its being a half-circle, it is a half-circle because it is partly rounded and partly cut off from roundness. There is the fundamental notion of embracing each other: a man and woman embracing or holding hands. For instance, a kiss could be regarded as a half-circle concept—two half-circles meet and therefore make a kiss. It is the concept of passion, but it is not only connected with pure passion in itself; it is also connected with the idea of meeting the mind of another. It is also the idea of daring to let go. The idea is that once there is a sense of richness and of no poverty, we can let go, give away, be generous. This is the source of the third karma, the magnetizing principle.

The fourth action is depicted by a green triangle. It is connected with activity and with destruction. It is green and associated with the strength and power of the wind. Its basic, inherent nature is fearless. A sense of power exists, but the triangle also suggests a very sharp connection by creating three points. That is to say, the meeting of the positive and the negative, as well as the neutral, makes a threesome: therefore, it is a triangle. The notion of balance comes along with that, because if there is too little fearlessness, you might be a coward; and if there is too much fearlessness, everything is too intellectual; so we have a basic point of balance. The triangle is also regarded as representing liberation, or freedom. It is the gate of freedom as to how to perceive reality. So the fourth karma is a heavy one, destruction. It's very simple and clean-cut, as if you were running into a Wilkinson's sword blade. It cuts in all directions. Very simple.

The diagrams representing those four—the blue circle, the yellow square, the red half-circle, and the green triangle—are not regarded as magical or mystical. They are simply regarded as manifestations of how we relate with our lives. If we simplify the color perspective of the four karmas by combining the four colors—blue, yellow, red, and green—into two, the result is lemon yellow and purple. Those two colors were the imperial colors in the courts of China, Japan, Korea, and India, and in the empire of Ashoka as well. Lemon yellow is connected with strength and with the father, or king principle. Purple is considered to

be the ultimate feminine, or queen principle. When the masculine principle and the feminine principle are joined together, you have the complete accomplishment of all four karmas—pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying. Everything is accomplished in that way.

When we begin to realize pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying as the natural expression of our desire to work with the whole universe, we are free from accepting too eagerly or rejecting too violently; we are free from push and pull. In Buddhism, that freedom is known as the mandala principle, in which everything is moderated by those four activities. In the mandala, east represents awake; south represents expansion; west represents passion or magnetizing; north represents action. That seems to be the basic mandala principle that has developed

The first karma, pacifying, is in the east and represents the cooling off of neurosis. We develop a sense of peace and coolness, which cools off the boredom and heat of neurosis. The manifestation of pacifying is gentleness and freedom from neurosis. The enriching principle, in the south, is basically the absence of arrogance and aggression. Arrogance is overcome—it is transparent. Magnetizing, in the west, is overcoming poverty. It is free from poverty. The fourth karma, destroying, is the destruction of laziness. It is in the north. The idea of the four karmas is not so much how we can handle ourselves, particularly, but it is how we can handle the whole world. We can actually operate from this basic mandala principle—in flower arranging, horseback riding, dishwashing, and all the rest.

State of Mind

Magic lies in the state of mind of the artist. This magic is wakeful magic. The artist's mind is able to tune in to a certain balance or wakefulness—we could call it enlightenment, in fact.

IN DISCUSSING THE state of mind of the artist, we begin with attitude. Visual dharma, its application and fruition, is based on the practice of meditation and on Buddhist vision. That does not mean we exclude the visions and the perceptions developed throughout the centuries by artists without a Buddhist background. However, in visual dharma, training one's mind seems to be the key issue. You might be musicians, painters, mathematicians, or photographers, but the principles of visual dharma still apply, to your work as well as to your lives.

Our attitude is the key to discovering the world. Obviously, we have a certain attitude toward ourselves, a certain attitude in relating to others, and a certain attitude in dealing with our world at large. If we haven't developed the right kind of attitude, it is impossible to connect with the world properly. Art involves relating with oneself and one's phenomenal world gracefully. In this case, the word *gracefully* has the sense of nonaggression, gentleness, and upliftedness; that is, a basic attitude of cheerfulness. It is important in becoming artists to make sure that we do not pollute this world; moreover, as artists we can actually beautify the world. Inspired in this way by our contact with dharma art, there is less room for neurosis. That is the actual project of dharma art, which is both necessary and important.

Where things often go wrong is that artists are very poor; and although they might have a lot of talent, intelligence, and vision, they have to struggle to make money. So day by day, hour by hour, their vision

goes downhill. In order to make money, they have to relate with perverted, neurotic people who demand that they go along with their particular vision, if you can call it vision at all. So those who commission or underwrite the art and the artist drag each other downhill. It all ends up in a neurotic psychological gutter. In the process you might become a glorious and famous artist, but your work of art is permeated with neurosis and cosmic garbage. In turn, the artistic standard of living of the world begins to go downhill, and we find ourselves living in a very degraded world. Artistic taste does not have to descend to that level of doing clever things to con people and becoming a fundamental con artist.

Our attitude and integrity as artists are very important. We need to encourage and nourish the notion that we are not going to yield to the neurotic world. Inch by inch, step by step, our efforts should wake people up through the world of art rather than please everyone and go along with the current. It might be painful for your clients or your audience to take the splinter out of their system, so to speak. It probably will be quite painful for them to accommodate such pressure coming from the artist's vision. However, that should be done, and it is necessary. Otherwise, the world will go downhill, and the artist will go downhill also.

The artist could take the attitude that to begin with, his or her artwork may not be a money-making venture or popular. But gradually, as you work with your client, your friends, and your audience, they discover that you are a good person. They see that you are genuine, interesting, with a sense of dedication and bravery—and even some arrogance, in the positive sense. Then your world might actually change. The audience and clients may begin to appreciate the way you put yourself into your work, appreciate that your attitude is right. You have actually given birth to an attitude of gentleness and goodness because of your dedication and trueness, so your work rises to a different dimension. At that point, the artist has tremendous power to change the world. The concepts of the world could be changed entirely—visually, audially, and psychologically—by the power of visual dharma.

The second topic is the magic of the artist. In this case, magic doesn't mean that you perform abracadabra in front of your audience or that you suddenly make a million dollars on one painting. Magic lies in the state of mind of the artist. This magic is wakeful magic. The artist's mind is able to tune in to a certain balance or wakefulness—we could call it

enlightenment, in fact. At that point, an artist is able to execute masterpieces. There have been examples of that in the past—by artists who were not necessarily Buddhists.

Great paintings have been made, great music composed, and all sorts of arts such as interior decoration and architectural designs executed by people who might not have been great students, technically speaking. So becoming a technocrat is not the way to train to become an artist. First there has to be a sense of vision taking place in one's state of mind. Such vision comes from a state of mind that has no beginning and no end. It is very present, on the spot. We could call that vision "first thought best thought." When that happens, there is no struggle. Anybody could become a genius from that point of view. Everybody has that essence and that possibility. That sense of genius and magic is always applicable.

First thought does not come from subconscious gossip, it comes from before you think anything. In other words, there's always the possibility of freshness. Your mind is not contaminated by neuroses all the time, so there are always possibilities that your whole existence could be good—which it is in any case. Goodness is always there—just catch it on the spot. By cutting through subconscious gossip, you take an attitude of delight in yourself that you are actually doing that. You have a sense of self-existing dignity. Therefore you don't feel so bad. You don't feel loaded with the stuff of your neurosis. So there is a sense of overcoming heaviness and depression. Then you begin to see first thought, which is best thought.

Having developed self-respect and learned a way that you can uplift yourself on the spot, at the level of first thought best thought, you begin to develop composure and decorum in your state of mind, your body, and your artwork. Composure inspires a sense of richness and beauty, and decorum is a sense of keeping your world together. With decorum, you and your world hang together so well that you do not create any destructive effects or schisms in the phenomenal world, which create further neurotic problems.

If you have both composure and decorum, you have a sense of fully being there, completely being there. You are actually able to cut subconscious gossip, which is the aspect of mind that constantly produces destruction and distractions of all kinds. For instance, when you are about to have a clear vision, a good idea, suddenly there is a gush of wind coming through, which we call subconscious gossip—and that clarity is

completely wiped out and destroyed. So it is necessary for us, particularly as artists, to have trust in first thought best thought. In that way, you will be able to cut through the subconscious gossip that creates doubt and resistance. Such directness is based on training and discipline, being willing to stick with your particular work of art or project until a sense of upliftedness takes place, your dignity develops, and a fresh first thought best thought emerges.

The dharma artist is not a self-styled artist painting a picture out of his own shit and piss and selling it for a million dollars, but an upright person, a good, gentle, and well-meaning person who is willing to cut through his or her subconscious gossip completely so that a straightforward, brilliant, precise, clear mind takes place. An artist doesn't have to moan and suffer and roll in neurosis all the time. Unfortunately, that perverted version of the artist had evidenced lately, particularly in the Western world. People tend to appreciate those artists who tune in to their particular style of expressing neurosis. They like that neurotic style, so they buy their work of art and cherish it as though they were collecting a pet. Likewise, some people might prefer a three-legged dog for a pet rather than a four-legged dog, because they think it's cute. In that way, art becomes corrupt and decadent, and the whole thing goes down the drain. In contrast, what we are trying to do is produce a work of art, in whatever form we might use, by developing a state of being in which the wakefulness and delight of the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings could be seen and expressed. What that comes down to, again, is one's basic state of mind.

In any perception, first there is the quality of *seeing,* that is, you project out to the world and you see something. That creates a kind of open ground. It also creates possibilities of choosing and rejecting, in the positive sense of discriminating intelligence, as opposed to having our choices determined by emotions such as passion and aggression. You simply see things just as they are. Having *seen,* you can begin to examine the phenomenal world further. At that level, you begin to *look.*

How do you do that? First there's a quality of abruptness—cutting your thoughts, cutting through subconscious mind, cutting any artistic theories altogether. You become just an ordinary individual seeing things at the level, we could say, of cats and dogs. Having *seen,* then you begin to *look* beyond that level and to develop a sense of composure about the whole thing. You actually begin to perceive how the world hangs to-

gether. If you want to design something or other, first you see the possibilities of the design; then you can begin to scrutinize and look further. By doing so, you develop a sense of how to appreciate the world of your design and how to manipulate the viewer at the same time—manipulate in the positive sense.

When you *see,* it is first impression. When you *look,* then you conclude what you have seen. Seeing is first thought best thought, and looking is second thought, maybe best thought. One never knows, it depends on your state of mind. We always see first. Having seen, then our usual selection process, called subconscious gossip, should not be employed. Instead, visual dharma should be employed so we can actually see with a taste, which is looking. That might mean that there is some kind of discrimination, but that's okay. Altogether, what happens is you *see* and then you *look*—and having seen and looked already, then you see again, which is the final conversion. Everything's fine, or maybe terrible—or question mark.

I would like to encourage everybody to practice meditation so we can actually see and look more. If we don't understand ourselves, it will be very difficult to appreciate anything else that goes on in our world. And on the whole, please cheer up. Don't analyze too much.

The next concept is joining the whole thing together and making a statement, which is based on threefold logic. This of course comes from first seeing and looking. Threefold logic is an old Buddhist tradition of how to perceive messages from the phenomenal world, how to appreciate a view completely, and how to present your personal view to somebody else as well.

Threefold logic has to do with presenting a complete world to somebody. Somebody may want you to design a wedding ring or a liquor cabinet or a suit. Somebody might want you to design a whole city or even a nice necklace for their Pekingese dog. Threefold logic can be applied to any situation that comes up. In threefold logic, first we have the ground, then path, and then fruition. It is like holding a fan: first holding the fan, then opening the fan, and then producing a breeze by waving the fan. So threefold logic works in this way: first, one establishes the ground; second, one perpetuates that ground with a certain logic; and third, one puts all of that together and confirms it. That's called threefold logic, and that kind of logic could be used in designing or producing a work of art. We could describe that as the heaven, earth, and man principle used in the

Japanese tradition of flower arranging, or as the three bodies of the tantric art of Tibetan vajrayana Buddhism—dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya. However they are described, the three aspects of the background of manifestation, the potential of manifestation, and finally manifesting altogether are very important in order to execute a work of art.

In the Shambhala tradition, we use the terms *heaven, earth,* and *man.* We start with the ground, which is heaven. Heaven is not necessarily empty space; it has the authority of divine principles coming down to earth, as well as a sense of goodness, gentleness, and togetherness. Heaven has a quality of looking down and a quality of conquering space. There is the sense of being unyielding and regal. There is also a playful aspect to heaven. That sense of openness and room to work could be very dangerous: if you wanted to trip out on it, the heaven principle could con you into situations. There could be some self-deception. The blank page is inviting you, asking you to start with your first dot. So you could start with first mind–best mind and invite a genuine heaven. That's the basic principle of heaven.

Then we can get into earth, which is a sort of grounded quality, or mother-earth principle. Pregnant earth, encompassing earth. It could develop problems with domesticity. Very gentle earth, accommodating everything, including chaos.

The man principle is quite daring and cute—particularly when they are babies, though one usually forgets about their diapers. Man has openness and strength at the same time; there is both daring and goodness. Man is not necessarily making reference to heaven and earth, but is just an individual existence, simply taking place.

Then we join them together; and to join heaven, earth, and man, we need a king. The king principle is not really a fourth logic but is the three of them brought together to become a unity. If you did not have heaven or sky, you couldn't exist. But heaven also depends on earth. If there were just heaven without earth, that would not make much sense; and if there were only earth, which is the confirmation of heaven, there would be the same problem. And if there were heaven and earth without anybody occupying that space, then nobody would be doing anything at all. Therefore there is man. And at some point all of them join together—not as a fourth principle of logic, but as an extension of the third principle to its logical conclusion. If we have some sense of the dharma of these three principles, then we could put them all together.

Heaven, Earth, and Man

A work of art is created because there is basic sacredness, independent of the artist's particular religious faith or trust.

DHARMA ART HAS TO DO with the state of mind of the artist and how we can communicate that fully to ourselves and to our world. In this regard, we could review the three principles of heaven, earth, and man. Heaven is regarded as space. It provides some psychological space in your state of mind, the sense that there's enough room for you to work. The space of heaven is primordial mind, free from conditions. It is not blank or vacant, but it accommodates everything. It has the quality of wakefulness, the quality of delight, and the quality of brilliance. So the general meaning of heaven is some kind of totality in which we can operate. We can actually walk, dance, kick, and stretch ourselves in that atmosphere. There's lots of room, lots of freedom, and also a sense of wakefulness.

That kind of space becomes an integral part of the process of creation. Restrictions and inadequacies usually come from feeling burdened, as though we are carrying a heavy load. But if we develop the notion of space fully and properly, we begin to find that there is no burden, no load. That is a relief—not just a petty relief, but a larger version of mind altogether. We begin to realize that an extraordinary openness takes place in our lives—in the way we move, the way we eat, the way we sleep, and the way we create a work of art. Tremendous freedom takes place in that basic space. Such freedom is not a product of the creation of art; it is preproduction freedom. That is very important for you to know. Before we produce anything at all, we have to have a sense of free and open space with no obstacles of any kind.

When we have that state of mind, and the right attitude and experience of space has happened already, then out of that comes what is known as blessing, or sacredness. When there's enough sense of space and of no struggle, we can afford to relax. We begin to discover what is known as sacred world, in which any artistic endeavor is regarded as sacred. This is not a product of being smart or clever, whether mathematically, technically, or politically. Sacredness is the binding factor in the heaven principle. If we have one thing here, something else there, and other things arranged all around in our design or visual concept, we don't clutter them all together; and we don't make the big mistake of reorganizing and reproducing our neurosis in the world, because there is a sense of sacredness or blessings. Any good work of art always has that notion of sacredness within it.

Some people look at a painting and think it looks sacred and holy because it invites the sanity of a particular religious tradition. They immediately label it as deriving from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism. But in fact, they regard the artist as having been indoctrinated into a certain faith and therefore able to produce a work of art in accordance with his commitment. I think that way of labeling works of art sacred is sacrilegious. It narrows it down too much, cutting out the whole aspect of human dignity. Basically, it is simply saying that a person who is relatively fanatic in his or her religious commitment will produce the best neurotic art according to that religion. That is a terrible thing to say, absolutely terrible. We are trying to go beyond that narrow sense of sacredness. A work of art is created because there is basic sacredness, independent of the artist's particular religious faith or trust. That sacredness is the heaven aspect, which creates an umbrella, so to speak, that becomes very powerful and very *real*. At that point, human dignity is more important than the particular religion or discipline a person came from. That sounds great, don't you think? Sacredness from that point of view is the discovery of goodness, which is independent of personal, social, or physical restrictions.

The second principle is earth, which has three categories. The first category is *absence of neurotic mind*. The artist produces a work of art on the spot. So whether the artist is sane in the long run or has a larger vision of things or not, each moment there are on-the-spot moments of sanity, connected with the healthiness of the artist's state of mind and his or her relationship to the medium and the work of art itself. Accord-

ing to the Buddhist tradition, neurosis refers to that state of mind which fixates and holds on to things. It is broken down into three categories: passion, which is too gooey, too much glue; aggression, which is too sharp, too threatening, too rejecting; and ignorance, which is a state of stupor that cannot discriminate left from right or black from white. Basically, we're talking about the absence of that, the absence of neurotic mind.

The second category of the earth principle is *thorough relaxation and wholesomeness*. That sense of relaxation is so thoroughly developed in your state of mind and body that as an artist you begin to develop tremendous softness. Your relationship to the world becomes very soothing. It is so soothing that before you create a work of art, you might feel as if you had gone through a washing machine. You are completely relaxed and you just flop. Your mind and body are so mixed together that a sense of goodness is already taking place in you. You could say it's like coming out of a sauna bath: you feel so relieved to come out of that room, and a sense of relaxation takes place. So basically we are talking about relaxation. Another school or philosophy of art might say that if the artist were aggressive and neurotic enough, on the spot that would produce a wonderful work of art. But to our way of thinking, from the visual dharma point of view, it is just the opposite. A person has to experience relaxation before producing a work of art.

The third category of earth is *absence of laziness*. When you begin your work of art, a certain drive develops, and that drive should be absent of laziness. You might have a great theme that you want to execute, so you have to go on constantly in accord with your vision of what you want to do. If you cut down your full vision and create a work of art at a half-vision level, that is breaking the discipline or morality of artistic endeavor. So there has to be an absence of laziness. In other words, when we want to produce a work of art, we should do it all the way.

Then we have the principle of man, which falls into two categories. Number one is *freedom from subconscious gossip*. If subconscious gossip is going on in your state of mind, if there is that sense of wildness and your mind is constantly filled with thoughts, then it is very hard to execute anything. So that has to be controlled and overcome. The problem there is that you are not relating with either the heaven or the earth principle, so you can hardly create a man principle at all. But wandering mind can be cut through, either before or during your execution of the work of

art. In fact, you can use the very process of executing the work of art as a way to cut subconscious gossip, through your commitment to the medium and to the vision that exists in you and in your work.

The second category of the man principle is *absence of regret.* Usually a sense of regret takes place all the time, which is known as artist's fever. Such regret usually relates to the past. But in this case, we are talking about regrets of all kinds: regrets of the future and regrets of the present, as well as regrets of the past. There is a very slick but at the same time very deep-rooted depression taking place, which looks back and forth all the time. With that kind of regret, which is almost remorse, completely obscuring your vision of heaven and earth, you can't produce a work of art at all.

All together, these three principles—heaven, earth, and man—deal with how we can integrate our state of mind into a work of art. A fourth principle, though not exactly the same kind of principle, is that of the universal monarch. It is what joins heaven and earth together. This principle is singlefold: that is, it says that body and mind are able to work together harmoniously. Therefore, the mind develops a sense of openness and peacefulness, and the body develops an absence of speed and aggression. In that way, a work of art becomes gentle rather than contrived or extraordinary. It becomes a good work of art, very genuine, and it becomes worthwhile, really good, to be an artist. You can take a lot of pride in being an artist, in the positive sense. You will be so happy and feel so good to be an artist. You can work according to the principles of heaven, earth, and man, and you can expose yourself by means of those principles. It could be extraordinary, quite fabulous.

Endless Richness

The whole philosophy of dharma art is that you don't try to be artistic, but you just approach objects as they are and the message comes through automatically.

TEACHING IS NOT MEANT to be verbal alone. It is very visual. For instance, a medium such as film, rather than converting people to Tibetan Buddhism, can provide virgin territory unadulterated by conventional or institutionalized spirituality for anyone with curiosity or a question in mind. I hope that awake people who question their own basic sanity will find another way of looking into their neuroses without getting just another "answer to their problems."

The whole philosophy of dharma art is that you don't try to be artistic, but you just approach objects as they are and the message comes through automatically. It is like Japanese flower arranging. You don't try to be artistic; you just chop off certain twigs and branches that seem to be out of line with the flow. Then you put the twigs in the container and the flowers underneath, and it automatically becomes a whole landscape. Likewise, when you see a painting by a great artist, it doesn't look as though someone actually painted it. It just seems to happen by itself. There is no gap, no cracks at all—it's one unit, complete.

Creating art is like meditating. You work with one technique for a long, long time, and finally the technique falls away. There's ongoing discipline and continuity, stubbornness. You are willing to relate with it even if the object rejects you or the light isn't right or something else goes wrong. You still go on and do it.

I would like to create a film in such a way that the audience has to take part in it. To do so, we would need to provide lots of space, speed, and richness. Those three principles, properly interrelated, seem to work

together so that the audience begins to take part in the presentation. As they watch the screen, they feel they are giving birth to each vision rather than passively absorbing some ready-made creation. There should be room to question, not have the whole thing presented to you like machine-gun fire. The audience should take part in it. To do so, space is the most important thing—space and silence. Then you begin to value objects much more. It is quite possible we might allow too much space, which may not be particularly popular at first. Nobody is going to say, "Wow, how exciting!" It may seem alien at first. But then, when they change gears and see it a second time, next week, next month, it will be different.

When people go to a movie, they go because they want a change. They want something to see besides their usual scene of washing dishes, working in the office, or whatever. This automatically means that they need space. So if a movie presents space, no matter how irritating it may be, it will be worth it. The audience won't come out tensed up; they'll come out relaxed. They will have gone through the whole trip of waiting to see something and then actually seeing something. They will have gone through an eye-massage process. That is a challenge for both the audience and the filmmakers. It is like crossing the Himalayas to escape from the Chinese.

It has been said with relation to maha ati practice that the eyes are one of the most important exits. In fact, they have been called the door of jnana, the highest wisdom. So visual effects are the most important in their effect on the mind. Generally, an audience comes to see a film with certain expectations. When they begin to feel they are not going to see what they expected, it is somewhat strangling. But at the brink of nothing ever happening, something happens—something quite different from what you expected.

A film should make suggestions rather than feed information. In fact, not giving information is one of the best things we can do to help the audience take part in a film. Once they have been fed, they have nothing else to do but walk out. But if not enough information is given, although indications are there, they have to work on it and think about what has been presented. This whole approach to art is based on putting out just a corner of our knowledge, instead of saying a lot, even though that would make people feel more comfortable and secure.

For instance, if you study with a teacher who acquired his under-

standing by information alone, that person may tell you very wise things, beautiful things, but he won't know how to handle the gaps. He blushes or he gets embarrassed or he fidgets around between stories, between the wisdoms that he utters. But if you are dealing with somebody who is completely competent, who is actually *living* the information, the teaching has become part of his whole being, so there is no embarrassment. It goes on and on and on, like the waves of an ocean. There is endless richness. You receive a lot, but at the same time you don't feel that he emptied out all his information to you. You feel there's much more to be said.

If you are completely confident in yourself, you don't have to think about the audience at all. You just do your thing and do it properly. You become the audience, and what you make is the entertainment. But that needs a certain amount of wisdom. When an artist does a painting for a commission, there is a good likelihood that his painting will be one-sided because he is aware of the audience, and he has to relate to the educational standards of that audience. But if he presents his own style without reference to an audience, the audience will automatically react, and their sophistication will develop, eventually reaching the level of the artist's.

Any entertainment that aspires to art should not work with the audience like an advertisement. Trying to please the audience lowers the level of sophistication constantly. That's what's wrong with the American marketing system. When you try always to please the audience, you have to produce more and more automatic gimmicks, more and more plastic. Finally, people don't even have to walk out of their rooms to make things work; they just press a button and get entertained.

As artists, we have the responsibility of raising the mentality of the audience. People might have to reach out with a certain amount of strain, but it's worth it. The whole civilization then begins to raise its level of sophistication. It is possible that the first attempt will be a failure. You might not get enough people in the audience to work that way. But gradually they will pick up on it. That has actually been happening. If you relate to yourself properly, then, since there are a lot of people like you, you become a catalyst for the rest of the world. The audience comes to you as to a queen bee. There is less sense of salesmanship or the feeling that you have to con people, so people come to you.

The beautiful thing about Buddhism, if I may say so, is that Buddhists don't try to con you. They just present what they have, say it as it is,

take it or leave it. If you try to con people, to make money immediately, it becomes prostitution. When we try to meet the immediate demands of the public in their present state of sophistication, we have to lower our standards constantly, whereas if we allow for some kind of resistance to our work, the audience has to jump up higher and higher. They have to work with their patience and they have to work with their sophistication, so the public automatically gets educated. It's a plot, but a compassionate plot.

People in this country are very awake; they are looking for something—and usually they get the something they expect. But next time, they will be able to get something beyond what they are used to.

Back to Square One

At this point, we are in a very powerful spot: being in the present, we can reshape the whole future. Therefore, shouldn't we be more careful, shouldn't we be more awake in what we are doing this very moment?

ART IN EVERYDAY LIFE seems to be our destination. The question is, how do we begin? Our main purpose is to develop an understanding of life and art. If we don't have a life of our own, we don't have art of our own, so we end up discussing the question of what is life—which is art, naturally. Life is based on various concepts and ideas, such as life being a big drama, a fantastic showpiece, an absolute torture chamber, or just gray. We have all kinds of ideas about it. But there seems to be a problem when we try to reshape the world. We don't reshape the world haphazardly, of course; we reshape it in accord with our beliefs and our dreams. So the world is reshaped according to our own ideas and the way we want it to be.

The problem with that is that, in the end, the world begins to haunt us back. Because we have reshaped the world, the world begins to demand more and more attention. Since it is our world, what we make of this world, it acts as a mirror. When that happens, a lot of people panic—enormously, to say the least. They begin to feel trapped in their own creation and see it as unjustified, something they didn't deserve. People go so far as to discuss the question of spirituality, the ultimate level of judgment, and the question of being fair to everybody. Everything seems to come back to the psychological, rather than the physical situation that we could do something about at the beginning.

Obviously, we must think first before we do. But the question is more complex: how to think, what to think, why to think, what is "to

think"? No one can stop or control your thought process or your thinking. You can think anything you want. But that doesn't seem to be the point. The thinking process has to be directed into a certain approach. That does not mean that your thinking process should be in accord with certain dogma, philosophy, or concepts. Instead, one has to know the thinker itself. So we are back to square one, the thinker itself: who or what thinks, and what is the thought process?

The thinking process, to begin with, is a confused one. If you really look into the depths of its existence, the whole thing is extraordinarily confused. It is jumbled up with a lot of stuff we have collected throughout our life of birth and death, our existence in our world. The question is, if we work with that, could we produce a work of art? Is there any hope that finally the world will be what is desired or dreamed of as a perfect world, the world that manifests itself as the re-creation of the Golden Age? It's doubtful. At the same time, nobody knows. Nobody experienced an absolute golden age—and even if somebody had created a golden age, it is doubtful whether that would satisfy us. Maybe we would begin to feel that there was a problem with it.

On that basis, how do we begin our world? Up to this point, we have not yet begun our world. However, we are still subjects of the world; we can't avoid that. But from this point onward, since we have not yet begun our world, we are the masters of the world, the creators of the world. We can do whatever we want, whatever we like. Since we can do anything we want, we seem to have a lot of power. So at this point, we are in a very powerful spot: being in the present, we can reshape the whole future. Therefore, shouldn't we be more careful, shouldn't we be more awake in what we are doing this very moment? I think the suggestion would be quite strong that, "Sure, we should." We should do something positive and intelligent or, for that matter, negative and intelligent. As long as there's intelligence involved, there seems to be no problem finding our way through.

The crux of the matter is: what do we do and how do we do it? Do we just sit and wait? Do we read stacks and stacks of books, trying to collect ideas from that? Do we take miles and miles of journeys, trying to meet with supposedly clever, enlightened people and collect information from them? Since we do not know what we are doing, if we do something in that light, it seems to be fruitless. Quite possibly we end up bumping into somebody who is absolutely absurd and getting false ideas

about what they have to say. We regard that as our first discovery and begin to mess up our future. Quite possibly, we could collect all kinds of garbage by reading books, and our misunderstanding and partial understanding could create enormous chaos. We could become a walking book, but what happens after that? Another alternative is just to have a good time, go to Florida, California, South America, drink tequila, listen to sweet music. Just forget everything and have a good time.

Somehow none of that is quite what we mean by nowness or being in the now. Nothing seems to be the ideal situation to fill that gap of nowness. Whatever we do, we are involved in some kind of trip, enormous deception. Our sense of boredom led us into entertaining ourselves, or trying to entertain ourselves, and that whole process has become a rat race, a vicious circle. It is constant, with no end, no beginning, purely absurd. Another suggestion might come up, which is to go and practice meditation. Try to raise your consciousness, whatever that may be. Try to imitate holy men and become a holy person. But that seems to be the same thing. So at this point, whatever we do, we can't get out of anything.

We don't seem to be doing anything real. We are constantly trying to mimic that and that and this and this. Nothing is very personal. There's nothing personal and nothing real in terms of our experience. Everything we do is copying something, following something, trying to find new materials to fit our own confused jigsaw puzzle. Somehow not only is that not working, but it is the wrong end of the stick. And if you expect me to give you the answer, that may be very hard to come by. It seems that whenever you have a problem, there is a concrete answer: "Take this pill. Do this." But that approach seems to be founded upon false premises, for the very reason that you find the answer because you are weak. Therefore you are fed by nipples. And if you feel lonely, you play with toys and you have a babysitter: "Let me read you a bedtime story. Let me sing you a lullaby." So we are back to square one.

If you really want to do something properly, if you really want to do it genuinely, we could say quite safely that you have got to be back to square one. You have to taste and experience that. Otherwise, there seems to be a problem with "art in everyday life," as the cliché goes. Any work of art is expressing ourselves in particular terms and concepts. Artistic talent is expressed in media of all kinds. But what is artistic talent? What makes you artistic? What convinces you, if you are uncertain,

that a work of art is a real expression of yourself? Or is a work of art something to make sure that the rest of the world is convinced about you, so that in turn you yourself find ground to exist? Such questions have never been looked at or studied properly. From this point of view, genuine artistic talent is experiencing a sense of being back to square one. Being completely bewildered by that, we make our first expression of art in the sense of copying or imitating, tuning in to a philosophy, or spiritual waves. But going beyond that approach, if we feel that we are back to square one and completely bewildered, we have a beautiful white canvas in front of us.

The topic of art in everyday life is not particularly designed for artists. Ordinarily, a good artist needs a lot of ideas, a lot of tricks and concepts. Hopefully, we will not provide that here, for the sake of our sanity. If I do so, I take everything back—what I have said and what I might say. I find myself working in administration, with organizational issues, which involves looking into the economy, aesthetics, and social situations of the groups of people involved. I am also involved with educational decision making of all kinds—and I find the best time for me to make decisions is when my mind is completely blank, when I find myself back to square one. At that absolute, unbiased level of mind, something takes place. I'm not suggesting that might be the trick, and it is not just a story, which could be very fishy. When we are back to square one, we cut all our connections and roots, and at the same time, we appreciate their shadows. Obviously, you still respect your umbilical cord, because you have a tummy button. Nobody has plastic surgery to remove that, and nobody regards it as an ugly mark; it is regarded as an organic expression that you have been born in this world and you have a tummy button.

Back to square one. That seems to be the starting point of any genuine expressions we might express. Genuine expressions have to be self-existing, born within one. So if you are going to express such genuine expressions, you have to get back to genuine ground. And so far as we are concerned, at this point the only genuine ground we have is back to square one.

If you cut all kinds of roots and fascinations, all kinds of entertainment, regarding it as a very subtle form of conmanship, what do you have? You might say, nothing. But it's not quite nothing—it's back to square one. The point is that your genuine existence and expressions should not be colored by any form of artificiality. However subtle, how-

ever magnificent, however beautiful or holy it may be, it still discolors your existence. So if you have a sense of ultimate cynicism, you are back to square one. If you see through any trips that are laid on you, or anyone trying to influence you, if you see through how you yourself are influencing somebody else's ideas or borrowing ideas and concepts from somebody else—then you are back to square one. What else do you have, except your square one? It's not difficult; we are constantly back to square one. If we are in the midst of making decisions and not knowing what to do; if we are confused, terrified, or sick—we are constantly back to square one. If we feel extremely weak, not knowing how to proceed to our next strategy, we are back to square one. It is very familiar ground. It is not a particularly extraordinary state of mind, but highly ordinary.

At that point, making a decision may involve a strategy that takes us off square one or a genuine expression coming from square one. It is very personal: sometimes it does; sometimes it doesn't. Take the example of falling in love. The conditions causing you to fall in love with somebody are not because your husband or your wife is a wealthy person, has a lot of intelligence, is a good breadwinner, or would be good for you. If you don't have those accessories and you begin to like somebody as another human being and appreciate him or her as your mate, then you are operating from a square-one point of view; whereas if you have been talked into it by your parents in a matched marriage or through religious concepts, it is operating from square thirty-three. However, if it is genuinely felt and personally experienced, it is like the elements: fire burns, water is moist, air moves, space is spacious.

Basically, square one is your ground. If you're on your own ground, I don't think there is any danger. Usually there's an element of sanity, a seed or essence of sanity operating in you if you are back to square one. There's something positive happening. If you feel that being back to square one is dangerous, that must be another square, not square one.

If you feel confused, you might wind up not doing anything. But actually, not doing anything at all might be healthier than wasting your time doing something. Everything amounts to that, eventually, so I think there's no problem with that. The situation of being cornered is good, if you can use such terminology. It is fruitful, genuinely square one. Unless you are cornered, you don't really do anything much. But once you are cornered, you begin to exercise your sanity and intelli-

gence. That's usually a characteristic of human behavior. I don't think anybody will stand still all that long, afraid to make a move. That nonaction might prove to be an embryonic situation.

Back to square one is more than simply trusting your intuition. We seldom have transparent intuition. Instead, our intuition is very solid and is influenced and colored by all kinds of things, and it is usually conditioned by concepts. Back to square one is simple, straightforward. You feel you've been cornered, and you have to pounce out in one way or another. Not knowing exactly what to do, you feel very vivid about the whole reality around you, and at the same time, you know that you've been cornered. Through the process of paranoia, you have been purified as well; you have been stripped to the waist and downward as well to your toenail and the floor you are standing on. So you have nothing to hide. You are completely transparent; you are cornered. It's more than intuition; it's experienced intuition. Usually the intuitive process is still a kind of radar system, rather than experience. This is much more real in some sense. It is very direct and somewhat extraordinarily penetrating.

You could get yourself into such a square-one situation. In the Buddhist tradition, it's part of the discipline, or path. But it is not a path in the sense of going forward and speeding to your goal. Instead, you are coming backward, getting *into* the whole thing rather than getting *out of* it. And sometimes you find that the rug has been pulled from under your feet; you find yourself back to square one. If you work with that situation—not try to get out of it but sit with it and nurse that experience of immense desert, the desolation of not finding anything to fool around with—then there seems to be something to it, definitely. Square one is where you come back to when you are finally thrown back on your backbone. However, there is a problem if you hear too much about the merits of square-one-ness. It becomes a doctrine again, and it ceases to be square one. At that point, it is something else; we could hardly call it square one.

Genuine square one is when you realize the desolateness, the spaciousness, and all kinds of words we could use for that which is completely devoid of any feedback at all. You are pushed back and punched in the nose—but you are still sitting there cross-eyed, like an owl made out of gold. You are slightly sick because you have finally confronted your good old self, but at the same time, you feel slightly relieved because you can still maintain your existence. That type of square one is

primordial, rather than imaginary, or a doctrinally conceived idea or concept. It is the really genuine one. Square one should be devoid of any culture. When you're at a low moment of your energy, completely beaten down to the point of death and it feels like you are a piece of shit, you don't feel any culture about that. You feel very genuinely noncultural—and definitely real.

A sense of nonthinking is necessary at the same time as a sense of the thinking process. According to the Buddhist tradition, the sitting practice of meditation provides basic footing, solid ground to develop further understanding, further experiences of square one. So I feel somewhat guilty if I provide just words, words, words, planting further confusion in the world of confusion; whereas if people sit and stop thinking and talking by means of meditation, I feel that we have planted dynamite to transcend the world of confusion. So it would be good if you could practice meditation as much as you can, as much as is physically and psychologically possible. It would be good if you could get into the sitting practice of meditation. You could become more clear and sane, and you could also influence the national neurosis in that way. Keep that in mind.

If you begin to step out of square-one-ness, then you can trip out on all kinds of things. I think it is a problem that artists are not willing to go back to square one. They are unwilling to face their basic situation unless they can find a dramatic message in it. Obviously, people on Madison Avenue appreciate it if artists come out with a dramatic message, which helps in exhibiting their showpieces. But that is not the only world—there are other worlds than Madison Avenue, as we know.

If there is desire, it's easy to portray. But if there is no desire, it's very hard to portray that feeling in terms of visual art. For instance, people have great difficulty portraying the Buddha, because he doesn't do anything. He just sits there. Bodhisattvas, the people who out of compassion took vows to save all sentient beings, are easier to portray. They tend to have a benevolent look, very gentle and soft, and they are supposed to show sorrow and pain because they realize that their fellow sentient beings are in pain and they want to save them.

The question of square one is very important. An artist should not try to get away from his media, which includes his life situation. And for that matter, meditators, who are also artists, should not get away from *their* media: their passion, aggression, and ignorance—whatever goes on in their minds. As long as you try to get away from that and look for

alternatives, such as a better future or more pleasant experiences, then you begin to mess up the whole thing. So the issue is keeping your ground, where you came from. You should not be ashamed of that. If you are black, you're black; if you are white, you're white. You cannot get away from it, or have plastic surgery. So it is a question of acceptance. From that point of view, art is the practice of meditation, and meditation is a work of art.

Everybody has their own square one, and they get back to it. That seems to be a universal thing; otherwise, they wouldn't exist. Since everybody does exist, since they have their existence and functions in life, there is the possibility of seeing square one in a more clear and precise way. One is one; it is a number. When you have one, that indicates the possibilities of two and three and four. But that doesn't necessarily mean that you are going to get to square two and the rest of it. Then you have zero, which is not any kind of figure. It denotes nothing, I suppose. We want to be something, right? Even if we are back to square one, we are there, we are something. We don't want to be nothing, and we constantly try to avoid that. That is the problem. So the only alternative—not even alternative, but only choice, so to speak—is to be zero.

So square one is the basic ground from which we function, and square zero seems to be beyond even our functioning. Isness, without any definitions. It is not so much branching out, but branching in. There is still resistance to going back to zero, and it has always been a problem that square one could be the excuse for you not to have to go back to zero. At least you have the number one to clench on to; at least there's that first number you made. You achieved your identity at square one, and that seems to be the problem. So ultimately, one has to return to zero. Then you begin to feel that you can move around. You can do a lot of things, not be numbered. You're not subject to your own numbers, and you are not confined to a pigeonhole. So your situation could be improved if you know you have nothing but zero, which is nothing. There's no reference point anymore, just zero. Try it. It is an expression of immense generosity and immense enlightenment.

Art Begins at Home

Dharma art is not purely about art and life alone. It has to do with how we handle ourselves altogether: how we hold a glass of water, how to put it down, how we can hold a note card and make it into a sacred scepter, how we can sit on a chair, how we can work with a table, how we do anything.

DHARMA ART IS NOT purely about art and life alone. It has to do with how we handle ourselves altogether: how we hold a glass of water, how to put it down, how we can hold a note card and make it into a sacred scepter, how we can sit on a chair, how we can work with a table, how we do anything. So it is not a narrow-minded approach or a crash course on how to be the best artist and get the best money out of that. I'm afraid it doesn't work like that. Dharma art is a long-term project, but if you are willing to keep up with the basic discipline, you will never regret it. In fact, you will appreciate it a lot and you will be very moved at some point. Whenever you make your breakthrough and develop that reference point, you will appreciate it and enjoy it enormously. You will be so thankful. That is my personal experience. It has been done, and it will be done in the future.

Dharma art is a question of general awareness. It is much more than art alone. For instance, if you are involved with an art form, such as flower arranging, you could begin with your own household, organizing it in that fashion. You could set up a place for flower arrangements. In a Japanese household, there is always a place for a central arrangement, called a tokonoma. Or in the Buddhist tradition, there is always a shrine of some kind. Not only that, but you could work with the notion of how you arrange the kitchen, where you put your cups and saucers and where you put your pots and pans, how you put things away and ar-

range them properly. Also, in the bathroom, where you put your soap, where you put your towel; and in the bedroom, how you fold your sheets. You begin to come into your home with a sense that there is a total household, which takes hard work and discipline. At the same time, it is so elegant and practical that you don't have to run into messy edges of any kind. That seems to be the start.

Once you have your domestic setup properly done, ideally you can invite a few friends to your house and show them how you handle your life. From that you can introduce flower arranging to people. In that way, flower arranging is not just something you do when you are feeling bad, like making a little flower thingy for your mantelpiece; it is a total world. Students should learn that; they should know that. You are not just making flower arrangements in your living room, but you have that same general sense of perception everywhere. So dharma art involves how to rinse your towel in the bathroom, how you hang it up properly so it dries nicely and you don't have to iron it. It has to do with how your sheets are folded, how your table is placed in the sitting room. It is a total world, in which you pay attention to every little detail. If the executive director of IBM came to visit you, and you were fooling with these little things, he might think you were crazy—but on the other hand, he might appreciate you. This approach is not necessarily Oriental; it is just the basic sanity of how you do things properly and have a place for everything. It is running your household as a work of art. That seems to be the main point.

In this case, the particular arrangement of the household is not the duty of the husband or the wife or the children, but everybody does it. They each do their part, so nobody begins to be labeled as the house-cleaner or the cook. Everybody in the family should learn how to cook, and they should also learn how to clean up after they have cooked. Everybody should learn how to make things clean and orderly. That way, eventually you won't need a spring cleaning, as they say. Instead of once a year doing a whole big sweep, it's being done every minute, every hour, every day. So everything is being handled properly and beautifully, and you begin to appreciate your home.

Even though you might be living in a plastic-looking condominium or apartment, you can still look elegant. That seems to be the basic point. It's very natural. You don't just throw things on the floor. When you take off your pajamas, you fold them up and put them in their

proper place. Dharma art is natural awareness. You do not need to make a special effort or have a chunk of time in order to do a good job. It's just a question of where you place your soap on your dish, how you fold your towel, which doesn't take all that much extra time. That is dharma art, actually. We could experiment with that. Do you think it's possible?



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The Art of Calligraphy

Joining Heaven and Earth

EDITED BY
Judith L. Lief

Introduction

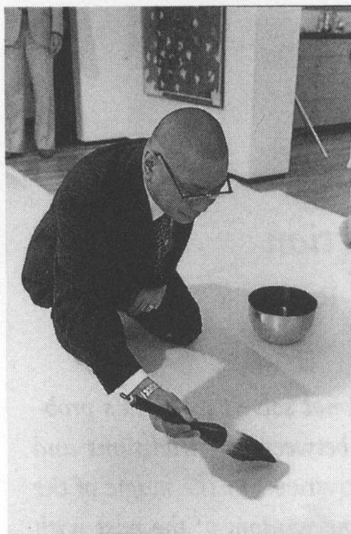
DAVID I. ROME

Venerating the past in itself will not solve the world's problems. We need to find the link between our traditions and our present experience of life. Nowness, *or the magic of the present moment, is what joins the wisdom of the past with the present. When you appreciate a painting or a piece of music or a work of literature, no matter when it was created, you appreciate it* now. *You experience the same now in which it was created. It is always* now.

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA
Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior

DURING THE TWENTY-YEAR PERIOD of his remarkable proclamation of Buddhist and Shambhala teachings in the West, brush calligraphy was a primary means of expression for Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Through his practice of calligraphy, Trungpa Rinpoche captured the moment of *now* and gave it concrete expression in order that others, in other times and places, might also experience *now.*

Trungpa Rinpoche emphasized what he called "art in everyday life." As he explains at some length in the essay published in this book, this means that the attitude, insight, and skill one brings to creating a work of art are not different from the attitude, insight, and skill with which one approaches every aspect of life. The "sacred world" expressed







Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche executing a calligraphy for a dharma art exhibit in Angeles, circa 1980.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA ROTH. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



through art is not in opposition to a profane world. Samsara and nirvana are nondual. This basic view, so different in its thrust from the mainstream of Western spiritual and artistic tradition, sees "Art" as part of a continuous spectrum that includes every kind of creativity in one's life—even, as Rinpoche was fond of saying, how we brush our teeth and wear our clothes.

While not separate from everyday life, art nonetheless represents a heightening of experience, what Trungpa Rinpoche refers to as "extending the mind through the sense perceptions." It is the apprehension and the expression of what he calls "basic beauty," beauty that transcends the dualities of beautiful versus ugly. Basic beauty is recognized and captured through the threefold dynamic of heaven, earth, and man. This ancient Oriental hierarchy of the cosmos, and of our experience of it, forms the basis of Trungpa Rinpoche's essay. Focusing in turn on artistic creation, the process of perception, and the discipline of artmaking, he explicates the heaven, earth, and man aspects of each.

The essential moment in both creation and perception, the moment when heaven and earth touch, is indicated by Trungpa Rinpoche's hallmark phrase "first thought best thought." Whether applied to art or to life in general, the import of this slogan is not so much that we should seize on the first thought or image that pops into our head; rather, it is to trust in a state of mind that is uncensored and unmanipulated. "It's the vajrayana [tantric Buddhist] idea of . . . simplicity, no ego involved, just purely"—here Rinpoche pauses and gasps, then continues—"precise! Tchoo!"

The mark of first thought is what Trungpa Rinpoche calls "first dot." In executing a calligraphy, this is literally the first touch of the brush tip, soaked with rich, wet, black ink, to the pure white ground of the paper. It is the moment of joining heaven and earth, making the nondimensional mark that signals the unconditional nature of space. Figure and ground, form and emptiness, time and space, are born together. From this seed, in turn, all manifest forms and experiential phenomena arise.

Every calligraphy begins with a first dot. From it, the rest of the statement unfolds in the manner of a haiku poem—beginning, middle, end. Indeed, Trungpa Rinpoche's calligraphies can be read as visual haiku, a kind of nonthought action painting that captures and records unique moments of awareness. They are—to borrow Rinpoche's characteriza-

tion of the nature of reality as perceived by the fully realized mind of mahamudra—"symbols of themselves."

Only a small number of Trungpa Rinpoche's calligraphies have been reproduced heretofore, some in very limited editions. The great majority exist only as originals, and most of these are in private hands. Since Rinpoche's death in April 1987, a major archival effort has been launched to gather together and document his work in its multitude of forms, including a sustained effort to photograph and document the calligraphies. It is now possible to offer a representative selection of the hundreds of black-on-white calligraphies executed by Trungpa Rinpoche from the time of his arrival in North America in 1970. We are pleased to present these to a broader public in the form of this book, and we feel confident that Rinpoche himself would have been delighted by such a production. His essay published here under the title "Heaven, Earth, and Man" has been freshly edited from a series of talks given in July 1979 in Boulder, Colorado. In addition to enriching one's appreciation for the works here illustrated, it serves as an important statement in its own right of Trungpa Rinpoche's view and practice of art.

Although a full biographical sketch is beyond the scope of this introduction, some understanding of Trungpa Rinpoche's life journey as it pertains to the development of his calligraphy practice may be helpful. Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Lord Mukpo, was born into a seminomadic peasant family in a remote region of Eastern Tibet in or about 1940. At the age of one year he was recognized as the eleventh tulku (reborn teacher) in the lineage of Trung Mase, a great Tibetan Buddhist master of the fifteenth century. He was brought to the monastery of Surmang, ancient seat of the Trungpa line, and began the rigorous monastic training that would prepare him to assume its leadership. Though no one could have imagined it then, this training also laid the foundation for his remarkable career as a Buddhist teacher in the West from the mid-1960s on.

In his autobiography, *Born in Tibet*, Trungpa Rinpoche mentions Tibetan calligraphy as an important component in his training from an early age. Responding to a question during the 1979 "Dharma Art" seminar, he gives the following account: "When calligraphy is taught in Tibet, China, or Japan, at first you don't do your calligraphy fast at all.

The 'grass' style, or cursive style, is not taught right away. You are trained first in the very classical style of how to make a stroke, how to dip your brush, how to use the nib in your inkpot. Everything is precise, very precise. In fact, at the beginning you just learn to make straight lines on your paper, which is quite boring from the American point of view. But one has to go through those processes. You cannot become a full-fledged so-called artist on the basis of frivolity and quick jumps. There is no such thing as a crash-course Berlitz school of art. That's a contradiction in terms."

After mastering straight lines, Rinpoche would have been set to work on learning the several varieties of the formal cursive script called u-me. At some point he would have also practiced u-chen, the block-letter alphabet adapted from an Indian script in the seventh century—the same letters that are painstakingly carved in reverse on woodblocks in the traditional technique for printing sacred texts. Finally, he developed his own distinctive style of the fluid cursive script known as chu-yik. Examples of all three calligraphic hands appear in this book. In some cases (see, for example, page 235), block letters are employed for a main text consisting of a single word or seed syllable, upon which a longer passage written in cursive expands or comments.

Growing up in Eastern Tibet, Trungpa Rinpoche would have had considerable exposure to aspects of Chinese and Mongolian culture. Though he does not mention it specifically, one may guess that he would have seen Chinese calligraphy in some form from an early age (including the missives of a rapidly encroaching Chinese Communist regime). His initial exposure to Japanese culture, which would play so large a role in his work both as meditation teacher and artist, seems to have occurred during the three years he spent in India following his escape from Tibet in 1959. From India he went to England and Oxford University, and it was during this period that he undertook a concentrated study of ikebana, Japanese flower arrangement, under Stella Coe, a prominent British teacher in the Sogetsu line. Here Trungpa Rinpoche would have worked hands-on with the organizing principles of heaven, earth, and man that form the subject of his essay in this book.

Shortly after arriving in North America in 1970, Trungpa Rinpoche had two auspicious meetings in California with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, founder of San Francisco Zen Center and a key figure in the establishment of genuine Zen practice in the West. A powerful rapport arose

between the two teachers, the younger at the outset of his career and the older, as it turned out, nearing the close of his. Trungpa Rinpoche was excited by the elegance and simplicity of the Zen aesthetic. Henceforth it became a key to many aspects of his re-visioning of Tibetan Buddhist tradition for the West. His dialogue with Zen, including Zen calligraphy practice, continued in succeeding years with other prominent Japanese teachers in the West, such as Taizan Maezumi Roshi and Kobun Chino Roshi.

The Japanese current in Trungpa Rinpoche's work culminated in the arrival, in 1980, of Kanjuro Shibata Sensei. Twentieth-generation bowmaker to the Japanese emperor and master of kyudo, the ancient art of Japanese archery, Shibata Sensei came to America at Trungpa Rinpoche's invitation to train his students in kyudo and, in a larger sense, in the court and warrior traditions of feudal Japan. A close colleagueship, based on mutual respect, developed between the two and further piqued Rinpoche's interest in things Japanese and Chinese. He applied himself to the study of kanji, the Chinese ideograms that for thousands of years have been the vehicle of much of the world's greatest calligraphy.

This period also marked the culmination of Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings concerning the Kingdom of Shambhala. He lost no time in putting kanji to use in a series of calligraphies expressing key Shambhala ideas: Great Eastern Sun, emperor, windhorse, kami. Often he would painstakingly fashion the formal kanji symbol and then fluidly add the identical word in Tibetan. Or, if his friend Shibata Sensei were present, he would request him to execute Japanese calligraphy to mirror his own in Tibetan.

Trungpa Rinpoche delighted in having partners in the creation of art. At times he presented this as a challenge, as when he would start off a spontaneous poem and then—unexpectedly, perhaps—call upon everyone present to contribute a few lines before "capping" the group effort with his own finale. One of the funniest and most captivating examples of such artistic partnering is the joint calligraphy with Karel Appel, the eminent Dutch artist, done when Appel visited the Naropa Institute in the early eighties.

A large number of Trungpa Rinpoche's calligraphies consist of single words or short phrases, usually central concepts or images of buddhadharma and Shambhala teaching: chö (dharma); prajna (discriminating awareness); sopa (patience); sharchen nyima (Great Eastern Sun); lungta

(windhorse). Sometimes Rinpoche would calligraph a stanza of poetry, the poem generally as spontaneous as the calligraphy itself.

Vowel sounds in Tibetan, not unlike Hebrew, are represented by signs above and below the consonants. This provides a pleasing vertical dimension to the writing that complements the left-to-right axis of the letters. Although Tibetan, like English, is normally written horizontally, Trungpa Rinpoche frequently arranged words and even separate syllables vertically, thus achieving an effect closer to that of Chinese or Japanese calligraphy.

Trungpa Rinpoche's Tibetan calligraphies, executed with Japanese brush and sumi ink, represent a creative merging of two distinct Oriental traditions. The traditional writing implement of Tibet is the bamboo pen. As in Hebrew and Gothic lettering, the pen lends itself to straight lines, sharp angles, and abrupt transitions from thick to thin. The brush employed for Chinese and Japanese calligraphy, on the other hand, is given to sinuous curves and subtle modulations of direction and stroke width. Rinpoche (as in so many matters) got the best of both worlds.

Inevitably, Trungpa Rinpoche also experimented with calligraphy in English (see example on page 245). However, Roman lettering offers much less dynamic scope than the Oriental written symbols, and it is certainly for this reason rather than any cultural bias that Rinpoche stuck mostly to Tibetan and, later, Chinese and Japanese, in his calligraphy. (By contrast, his mature poetry is almost entirely in English, which offered him a much larger stylistic and imagistic scope than Tibetan.) There are even examples of Hebrew calligraphy by Trungpa Rinpoche; although he did not know the language, he appreciated its calligraphic potential and was delighted to copy from words written out by students of Jewish background.

Another frequent subject of Rinpoche's calligraphies are "seed syllables." In vajrayana Buddhism, certain monosyllabic sounds—OM is the best-known example—serve to embody the essential energy of a tantric deity. Voiced and visualized in meditative practice as a means for rousing the deity's presence, seed syllables also serve in written form to empower places and representations and generally to protect practitioners' state of mind and sacralize their perceptions. The calligraphy HUM BHYO (page 225) combines the seed syllables of male and female protectors. Trungpa Rinpoche executed and presented this calligraphy each time a

local dharma study group became a Dharmadhatu, a full-fledged and legal member of Vajradhatu, the international network of Buddhist practice communities that he founded.

There are also abstract calligraphies, dating mostly from the late seventies. They seem to represent a convergence of several artistic disciplines: traditional Oriental calligraphy, Tibetan thangka painting (there are a handful of gemlike traditional thangkas that Rinpoche painted early on), experiments with watercolors, and occasional small drawings, often of a humorous sort. Just as his poetic voice, which at first was imitative of both Tibetan and British traditional modes, released into something much freer and more idiosyncratic after his arrival in North America, so Rinpoche's use of brush and ink became progressively bolder and more original. In the early seventies he experimented with ink washes to create a background or textural space, against which he calligraphed a symbol or an abstract image, often organic in feeling. But the technique he settled on and stayed with was one in which space is articulated simply by the contrast of the white paper and the black gesture that it accommodates.

Trungpa Rinpoche regarded the merchandising of art as corrupting, to both artist and audience. Although in later years he was generous in executing calligraphies for sale at benefit auctions, Rinpoche himself never did artwork for the purpose of generating income. Unlike his poetic composition, however, which seemed to occur spontaneously, Trungpa Rinpoche's calligraphies were almost always done for some specific purpose. Many were made for the walls of practice centers such as Karmê Chöling in Vermont, Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in Colorado, or the numerous Dharmadhatus in cities throughout North America and Europe. Others were presented to individuals. In fact, one can often identify the homes of his married students by the framed calligraphy hanging above the living room mantel—a wedding gift from Rinpoche. Or a student setting up in business would request a calligraphy to hang auspiciously in the new office. Some calligraphies were executed publicly in the course of programs on "Visual Dharma" or "Dharma Art," such as the one from which Rinpoche's essay in this book is drawn. In the late seventies and early eighties he did a series of major dharma art "Installations," in which calligraphy appeared as just one element

among an entire arrangement of room space, furnishings, art objects, and large flower arrangements.*

Trungpa Rinpoche had a collection of Japanese calligraphy brushes of different sizes. These he regarded as sacred implements, treating them with the care and respect of a warrior for his weapons. If a brush hair came loose, Rinpoche would carefully remove it before proceeding with the execution of a calligraphy. For ink, Rinpoche generally made use of the bottled Japanese sumi ink available in American shops. He almost always worked in black, on rare occasions in red.

Paper type and quality varied enormously. In the earlier years, Rinpoche tended to employ whatever surface was ready to hand (including at times, the wall). Especially during his frequent travels, the quality of the materials he had to work with was uneven. Some of his largest and most dramatic calligraphies were, unfortunately, done on rolls of cheap newsprint. In later years the importance of high-quality paper was better appreciated, and Rinpoche made use of fine woven and laid papers, including several varieties of Japanese manufacture. He especially favored traditional Japanese shikishi boards, gold-leafed or off-white, and many of his late works were done on them (because of the difficulty of reproducing the gold ground, no examples of this type have been included). He was comfortable working at all scales, from the surface of a folding fan to long rolls laid on the floor, which he worked over Jackson Pollock style.

Rinpoche had a considerable collection of seals, each with its own particular history and significance. Most valuable were the ancient seals of the Trungpa lineage, some of them centuries old. For these, he had a special case prepared with fitted indentations, which was carried during his travels by a trusted aide, like the black box accompanying a President. Woe if it should be misplaced! The simplest of the seals was the Sanskrit EVAM, traditional seal of the Trungpa tulkus, which he eventually passed on to his American regent, Ösel Tendzin (e.g., pages 219 and 227). Larger traditional seals, one of which was a gift from the emperor of China to the fifth Trungpa in the early seventeenth century, are in Tibetan or Chinese seal script. Inevitably, Trungpa Rinpoche added to the collection of seals he had inherited from his predecessors new ones of his own design.

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*One such installation is depicted in the documentary film *Discovering Elegance*, shot in Los Angeles in 1980.

Prominent among these are the large and small scorpion seals. The scorpion is a symbol of sovereignty and command—once one has been stung by the scorpion there is no undoing it. Rinpoche used the scorpion seals on calligraphies embodying themes connected with the Kingdom of Shambhala. The new seals were manufactured initially in hard rubber; later, traditional ivory or stone ones were made, and Rinpoche had one scorpion seal produced from meteoric iron. (For additional information about the seals, see Appendix.)

Rinpoche was partially paralyzed on his left side, the result of an automobile accident. It was difficult for him to sit in "warrior posture," or seiza, the traditional Japanese kneeling posture for calligraphy. When working on a small sheet, he would sit at his desk. Such was the case when he calligraphed names for the traditional refuge and bodhisattva vow ceremonies; these were done on 8½ by 11–inch specially watermarked bond paper, sometimes over one hundred at a time in rapid succession. On these occasions a small assembly line of assistants would be on hand to help seal, remove for drying, and order the sheets for the ceremony which Rinpoche would perform, later the same day or on the day following. When executing larger calligraphies, Rinpoche stood at a table. This may have been specially set up in the sitting room adjoining his downtown office; in later years, it would more often have been the dining room table at the Kalapa Court, Rinpoche's large residence on "the Hill" in Boulder, Colorado.

When about to execute a calligraphy, Trungpa Rinpoche would seem for a few moments to be in a state of absorption, often accompanied by a gesture of repeated dipping of the brush into the ink and smoothing the brush hairs against the side of the ink bowl. Then he would raise the brush, while gazing intently at the white space of the paper before him. In this second, onlookers could feel an arresting of habitual thought patterns as space and time crystallized into a pure, undivided moment. Then, gently but with great conviction, the brush would descend to the paper and make its first dot. Often Rinpoche would pause the brush on this first mark, as if waiting for the calligraphy to be born from its seed. Then the brush would start to move, in a continual forward flow free from hesitation or strain.

Typically, the initial one or two strokes of a calligraphy by Trungpa Rinpoche have a gentle deliberateness, evoking a sense of mindfulness and precision; then there is a crescendo, expressed in greater speed of

execution and a sense of leap or abrupt sword stroke; finally, a "follow-through" stroke both completes the gesture and lets go of it. This pattern can be seen in many of the works, abstract as well as literal.

After a moment of inspection, Rinpoche would set down his brush and select a seal. Then, as an assistant held firm the container of thick scarlet ink, he would ink the seal and apply it definitively to the paper, pressing hard with a slight rocking motion to ensure a sharp impression. Now the assistants would hold down the paper as Rinpoche pulled the seal off with a pleasing snap. For a brief moment, all would admire the newborn, completed artwork, before carefully removing it to a nearby surface to dry.

With a few exceptions, Trungpa Rinpoche worked in black on white or black on gold. A third focal point of color is provided by the brilliant red of the seal. His use of seals frequently went beyond the simple function of identification, becoming an active element in the composition—multiple impressions, impressions turned at different angles, or masked so that only a portion of the seal appears.

As with his use of seals, Trungpa Rinpoche also signed his work in a variety of ways. His earlier calligraphies are usually signed simply with his own name in Tibetan: *Chökyi Gyatso ne tri* ("written by Chökyi Gyatso"). Meaning "Ocean of Dharma," which in Tibetan often contracts to *Chö-gyam,* this is the "dharma" or religious name that Rinpoche received in childhood after his recognition as the eleventh rebirth in the Trungpa lineage. He rarely uses "Trungpa" to identify himself, and never "Rinpoche," an honorific meaning "Great Jewel" that is used for all tulkus. He at times uses other titles, such as Dorje Dzinpa ("Vajra Holder"), a high distinction bestowed on him by His Holiness Gyalwang Karmapa XVI, head of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Later works, representing Shambhalian themes, are often signed with his Shambhala warrior name, Dorje Dradül ("Indestructible Subjugator of Enemies") or Sakyong Dorje Dradül ("The Earth-Protector Indestructible Subjugator"). Sometimes he employed the English initials "DD of M," standing for Dorje Dradül of Mukpo. Mukpo, his family name, derives from one of the six ancient clans of Tibet. Trungpa Rinpoche traced his ancestry to the most famous Mukpo of all, the legendary warrior-king Gesar of Ling.

Rinpoche frequently equated brush and sword. "The brush is tempered and folded and beaten as a good samurai sword. . . . In conquering

from the East, brush stroke is the weapon . . . you realize that brush cuts and sword paints." Trungpa Rinpoche wielded his calligraphy brush as a sacred weapon. For him, the brush was a sword of nonaggression, a proclamation of transcending neurotic attachments and uplifting life for oneself and others. We offer this volume with the hope that it may contribute in some degree to the accomplishment of Rinpoche's dharma warrior-king vision for a world of peace, courage, and beauty.

David I. Rome served as Trungpa Rinpoche's private secretary from 1974 to 1983.

"Heaven, Earth, and Man" is based on a seminar entitled "Dharma Art" given in Boulder, Colorado, July 13–19, 1979. The seminar included lectures and discussions, group meditation practice, and art and ikebana exhibits. The Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, demonstrated his talks with calligraphies and illustrations, created and displayed on the spot by means of an overhead projector. In the discussions following each talk, Trungpa Rinpoche and the seminar participants practiced spontaneous poetry composition, creating a series of three-line poems based on the heaven, earth, and man principle. So in presenting this material, the Vidyadhara made use of the interplay of spontaneous expression, meditation, and study.

Heaven, Earth, and Man

1. Dharma and Art

"Genuine art tells the truth."

People often start with art and discover dharma out of that. But our approach is different: we begin with dharma, and then we try to find if there is any art in it. We start right at the beginning, right at the basic point, with the question of who we are, what we are, and what we are trying to do in terms of art. So in discussing dharma art, it is important to have some familiarity with dharma and why it is art, which is an interesting question.

Some people say that art is a way of expressing themselves which communicates to others. Others say that art is a discovery they have made out of nowhere, and from that they find their way of relating with others. Some people say art is pure spontaneity: if they are spontaneous, that in itself is art. But there are some problems with those basic conceptions of art. We first of all have to look at the intention or the motivation to create art. The motivation may come from a loss of your sense of identity. You have lost connection with the rest of the world and you cannot make friends with anybody. You may be crazy, sick, or confused, but you find one thread of connection, which is your talent, your artwork—so you try to hang on to that. In this case, you try to make a connection with the rest of the world by demonstrating your talent, regarding your art as a saving grace, a life rope. It is your last chance.

Sometimes people become known as great artists because of the quality of their art. People buy their works of art; they don't buy the artist, particularly. They run into the artist's studio and buy his or her production and get out as soon as possible, without getting into the artist's personality. In other cases, people use their works of art as calling cards, the hors d'oeuvre approach. Their artwork expresses their personality, so people begin to like them and accept them because of their art. Their art becomes a way of magnetizing people to themselves. Some artists are hermits who simply enjoy working on their art and are not concerned with selling what is produced. Such artists often refuse to sell or exhibit their work at all. Their only discipline or pleasure is in the creation of the work of art itself. These artists pursue the solitary style of the rhinoceros.

There are hundreds of millions of types of artists and approaches. Some artists are very neurotic; others are not all that neurotic. They are very individualistic, and many artists are garish in propagating their particular ego: their own colors, forms, and sounds. I'm not particularly trying to cut down artists. But we have to recognize how much neurosis comes out in works of art. We could quite safely say that at present sixty percent of the art produced is neurotic. The rest of it may be somewhat decent.

The problem stems from labeling ourselves as artists. When we begin to label ourselves as some kind of artist—"I'm a poet, a musician, painter, weaver, sculptor, potter," what have you—that prevents us from reaching beyond that particular scope. All sorts of neurotic possibilities could come out of that: hanging on to clay in order to produce a pot, hanging on to canvas in order to produce a painting, hanging on to a musical instrument in order to produce a sound. In the theistic world we never see any medium beyond the immediate situation, and that becomes a problem. For instance, when you are born, you immediately try to reach your mother's nipples; you try to do so as fast as you can, so that you don't have to think about your birth anymore. Then somebody else has to get a diaper to catch your cream- or mustard-colored deposit at the other end. We have been acting in that way for a long time, in our physical process of growth as well as when we produce works of art. We hang on to our immediate medium as our confirmation, so there is no space at all for us to expand beyond what is there. That is a problem. On the other hand, it might be a source of possibilities.

The name *artist* is not a trademark. The problem of the twentieth century is that everyone has become merchandised, everybody is a mercenary, everybody has to have a label: either you are a dentist, an artist, a plumber, a dishwasher, or whatever. And the label of "artist" is the biggest problem of all. Even if you regard yourself as an artist, when you fill in the occupation blank, I request you not to write "I am an artist." You might be the greatest artist, but that doesn't mean you have to put "artist" as your occupation. That is absurd! Instead you might write "housewife" or "businesswoman"—that is much better than calling yourself an artist. It seems to be problematic if you declare yourself an artist, because that means you are limiting yourself purely to artwork in the literal sense, as something very extraordinary and unusual. But from my way of thinking, and from what my training tells me, when you have perfected your art and developed your sensitivities, you cannot call yourself anybody at all!

Dharma means "norm" or "truth." It is also defined as peace and coolness, because it reduces the heat of neurosis, the heat of aggression, passion, and ignorance. So dharma is very ordinary, very simple. It is the stage before you lay your hand on your brush, your clay, your canvas—very basic, peaceful, and cool, free from neurosis.

Neurosis is that which creates obstacles to perceiving the phenomenal world properly and fully, as a true artist should. The basic obstacle to clear perception is omnipresent anxiety, which does not allow us to relate to ourselves or to the world outside ourselves. There is constant anxiety, and out of that anxiety comes a feeling of heat. It is like entering a hot room—we feel claustrophobic and there is no fresh air. That claustrophobia leads us to contract our sense perceptions. When there is 100 percent claustrophobia—the full heat of neurosis—we can't see, we can't smell, we can't taste, we can't hear, we can't feel. Our sense perceptions are numbed, which is a great obstacle to creating a work of art.

Tonight we are talking about art as a basic understanding of dharma. We sometimes have a problem with that basic understanding because we would like to come up with some gimmick. For instance, you might go up in the mountains and catch a baby monkey and bring him home, hoping that little baby monkey can play on your shoulder, run around your courtyard, and play in your kitchen. You hope he will relieve your claustrophobia, the heat of your neurosis. When he first decides to come along with you, that baby monkey might behave himself. But over time

he begins to become an extension of your neurosis, because the power of your neurosis is so strong and effective. So the monkey begins to become an expression of your neurosis, in the same way as your artwork does.

Some people say that if there were no neurosis, they could not become good artists. This view of art is the opposite of a sense of peace and coolness. It undermines the possibility of intrinsic beauty. Fundamentally, art is the expression of unconditional beauty, which transcends the ordinary beauty of good and bad. From that unconditional beauty, which is peaceful and cool, arises the possibility of being able to relax, and thereby to perceive the phenomenal world and one's own senses properly. It is not a question of talent. Everybody has the tendency toward intrinsic beauty and intrinsic goodness, and talent comes along with that automatically. When your visual and auditory world is properly synchronized and you have a sense of humor, you are able to perceive the phenomenal world fully and truly. That is talent. Talent comes from the appreciation of basic beauty and basic goodness arising from the fundamental peace and coolness of dharma.

When we begin to perceive the phenomenal world with that sense of basic goodness, peace, and beauty, conflict begins to subside and we start to perceive our world clearly and thoroughly. There are no questions, no obstacles. As anxiety subsides, sense perceptions become workable because they are no longer distorted by any neurosis. With that understanding, meditation practice becomes very powerful. Through the practice of meditation, we can relate with our thoughts, our mind, and our breath, and begin to discover the clarity of our sense perceptions and our thinking process. The ground of the true artist includes peace and coolness, as well as unconditional beauty. It is free from neurosis. That ground enables us to become dharmic people.

From that ground, based on the practice of meditation, we could branch out further and experience ourselves as what we are and who we are altogether. Sitting practice is a way of discovering ourselves. This particular approach is not necessarily my own invention. It is compatible with Christianity and other mystical traditions. The Quakers and Shakers developed traditions of suddenly rousing themselves in a particular moment to connect themselves with God. When they are roused, they lose their reference point altogether, they become nontheistic on the spot. Because of that, they are regarded as good Christians! The same thing

could apply to Judaism and to the Islamic tradition. [In such mystical traditions] when there is the highest moment of turn-on, your mind is open, on the spot. There is nothing happening, therefore everything happens. In the afterthought we try to resume being ourselves, being such-and-such, which becomes very embarrassing and problematic, like the cat who shits on the ground and covers it up with dirt.

When we begin to realize that the principle of dharma exists within us, the heat of neurosis is cooled and pure insight takes place. Because restfulness exists beyond the neurosis, we begin to feel good about the whole thing. We could safely say that the principle of art is related with that idea of trust and relaxation. Such trust in ourselves comes from realizing that we do not have to sacrifice ourselves to neurosis. And relaxation can happen because such trust has become a part of our existence. Therefore we feel we can afford to open our eyes and all our sense perceptions fully.

When relaxation develops in us, through letting go of neurosis and experienceing some sense of space and cool fresh air around us, we begin to feel good about ourselves. We feel that our existence is worthwhile. In turn we feel that our communication with others could also be worthwhile and pure and good. On the whole we begin to feel that we are not cheating anybody; we are not making anything up on the spot. We begin to feel that we are fully genuine. From that point of view, one of the basic principles of a work of art is the absence of lying. Genuine art tells the truth.

In this regard, poetic license is dubious. Stretching your logic to the extreme and supporting others or yourself through indulgence of any kind, or because you are good and popular and technically right, does not apply to dharma art at all. Everything has to be done with genuineness, as it actually is, in the name of basic beauty and basic goodness. Whenever no basic goodness or basic beauty is expressed, what you do is neurotic and destructive. You must not destroy people with your art through poetic license.

Some artists feel they have the right to create neurosis in their artwork in the name of art. Lots of people have done just that, and they have succeeded because when you attach yourself to other people's neurosis, you are bound to be successful. Cultivating other people's sanity is obviously more difficult. Nonetheless, you cannot jump the gun and latch on to the easy way out for the sake of making lots of money or

becoming a big name. There has to be the basic integrity of maintaining our human society in a state of sanity. That is and should be the only way to work with art. The purpose of a work of art is bodhisattva action. This means that your production, manifestation, demonstration, and performance should be geared toward waking people up from their neurosis.

Being an "artist" is not an occupation, it is your life, your whole being. From the time you wake up in the morning, when the buzzer in your clock rings to get you up, until you go to bed, every perception you experience is an expression of vision—the light coming through your window, the hot-water kettle boiling to make tea, the sizzling of the bacon on the stove, the way your children get up with a yawn and your wife comes down in her dressing gown into the kitchen. If you limit that by saying "I am an artist," that is terrible. It is showing disrespect for your discipline. We could safely say that there is no such thing as an artist, or art-ism, at all. There is just art—dharma art, hopefully.

My first important project here is to let everybody know that dharma art means not creating further pollution in society; dharma art means creating greater vision and greater sanity. This is a very important point. I would like to repeat it again and again and again so that we have an idea of what direction we are going in. I am not here to present a Buddhist gimmick, so that you can give your artwork a further twist, saying that you have studied with a Buddhist teacher and taken part in the Buddhist world. Instead, what we are trying to do is to be very genuine and benevolent and basic, so that we do not create passion, aggression, and ignorance in ourselves or in our audience. That is a very important point, and I would be completely appalled if we achieved the opposite result. I would commit seppuku on the spot.

2. Creation

"Being an artist is not an occupation; it is your life, your whole being."

The principle of heaven, earth, and man seems to be basic to a work of art. Although this principle has the ring of visual art, it also could be applied to auditory art such as poetry or music, as well as to physical or three-dimensional art. The principle of heaven, earth, and man applies

to calligraphy, painting, interior decoration, building a city, creating heaven and earth, designing an airplane or an ocean liner, organizing the dishwashing by choosing which dish to wash first, or vacuuming the floor. All of those works of art are included completely in the principle of heaven, earth, and man.

The heaven, earth, and man principle comes from the Chinese tradition, and it was developed further in Japan. Currently the phrase "heaven, earth, and man" is very much connected with the tradition of ikebana, or Japanese flower arranging, but we should not restrict it to that. If you study the architectural vision of a place such as Nalanda University in India, or if you visit Bodhgaya, with its stupa and its compound, or the Buddhist and Hindu temple structures of Indonesia, you see that they are all founded on the heaven, earth, and man principle. This principle is also seen in the interior decor of temples built in medieval times and occupied by a group of practitioners: monks, deities, lay students, and their teacher. The principle of heaven, earth, and man is also reflected in the makeup of the imperial courts of China, Japan, and Korea, and in their official hierarchy, which included an emperor, empress, ministers, subjects, and so forth. In horseback riding, the rider, the horse, and his performance are connected with the heaven, earth, and man principle, which also applies to archery and swordsmanship. Anything we do, traditionally speaking, whether it is Occidental or Oriental, contains the basic principle of heaven, earth, and man. At this point we are talking about the heaven, earth, and man principle from the artist's point of view rather than the audience's.

In the concept of heaven, earth, and man, the first aspect is heaven. The heaven principle is connected with nonthought, or vision. The idea of heaven is like being provided with a big canvas, with all the oil paints, and a good brush. You have an easel in front of you, and you have your smock on, ready to paint. At that point you become frightened, you want to chicken out, and you do not know what to do. You might think, "Maybe I should skip the whole thing, have a few more coffees or something." You might have blank sheets of paper and a pen sitting on your desk, and you are about to write poetry. You begin to pick up your pen with a deep sigh—you have nothing to say. You pick up your instrument and do not know what note to play. That first space is heaven, and it is the best one. It is not regarded as regression, particularly; it is just basic space in which you have no idea what *it* is going to do or what *you* are

going to do about it or put into it. This initial fear of inadequacy may be regarded as heaven, basic space, complete space. Such fear of knowledge is not all that big a fear, but a gap in space that allows you to step back. It is one's first insight, a kind of positive bewilderment.

Then, as you look at your canvas or your notepad, you come up with a first thought of some kind, which you timidly try out. You begin to mix your paints with your brush, or to scribble timidly on your notepad. The slogan "First thought is best thought!" is an expression of that second principle, which is earth.

The third principle is called man. The man principle confirms the original panic of the heaven principle and the "first thought best thought" of the earth principle put together. You begin to realize that you have something concrete to present. At that point there is a sense of joy and a slight smile at the corners of your mouth, a slight sense of humor. You can actually say something about what you are trying to create. That is the third principle, man.

So we have heaven, earth, and man. To have all three principles, first you have to have the sky; then you have to have earth to complement the sky; and having sky and earth already, you have to have somebody to occupy that space, which is man. It is like creation, or genesis. This principle of heaven, earth, and man is connected with the ideal form of a work of art, although it includes much more than that. And, to review, all of what we have discussed so far is based on the ground of health, on the idea of complete coolness, and a general sense of sanity.

3. Perception

"There is such a thing as unconditional expression that does not come from self or other. It manifests out of nowhere like mushrooms in a meadow, like hailstones, like thundershowers."

Having discussed the heaven, earth, and man principle in connection with the process of perception in *creating* a work of art, we could discuss what takes place in the individual who *witnesses* a work of art. First we discussed the perception and now we are discussing the perceiver, in that order. By perceiver we mean somebody who witnesses art—or, in fact, witnesses anything. As we discussed yesterday, the process of perception

is connected with one's state of mind, the general artistic environment, and the concept of art which has been formed.

In the ordinary nondharmic world, people judge a work of art by the fame and glory of the artist and by what it costs to buy it. Suppose Picasso made a little scratch in the corner of a paper and signed his name underneath—that paper would sell for a lot of money. As artists, you may think that this is the right approach, but it remains very mysterious why, when that same little scratch could have been made by anybody else, you still regard it as a great work of art because it sells for a million dollars. There is a lot of gullibility of that type, particularly in America.

We are also bound by the scientific approach of too many facts and figures. If you teach art in a college, you might be appreciated more for having your facts and figures lined up than for having artistic talent, beyond the neurotic level. This is like saying theologians should know how many hours Jesus Christ prayed in his lifetime. If they can come up with the statistics, we regard them as great teachers of theology. We find that same problem in many artistic disciplines. Ikebana, or Japanese flower arrangements, are now being measured scientifically to determine which angles are best for arranging branches. The person who puts the branches in the frog, or kenzan, at the correct angles is regarded as the best flower arranger. Everything has been computerized. In archery, you look through a sight on your bow so that you can shoot precisely, as though you had a gun rather than a bow and an arrow.

We lose a tremendous amount of spontaneity through relying too much on calculation and scientific artistry, computerized knowledge. Obviously, there is room for some of that: the power and the precision of a work of art can be scientifically measured. But from the practitioner's point of view, the whole thing can be so watered down by that approach that human beings aren't even needed. Robots might produce the best works of art, because robots are better able to be programmed than human beings, who sometimes are not very yielding and who carry their own individualism. A work of art has to be both spontaneous and accurate. Because of your spontaneity, therefore, you could be accurate. The overly scientific approach of having accuracy first and then some kind of programmed spontaneity is problematic. It could lead to the destruction of art.

In order to understand the perceiver or witnesser of art, it is important to discuss perception in general, the way we perceive things based

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In order to understand the perceiver or witnesser of art, it is important to discuss perception in general, the way we perceive things based

on the principles of *seeing* and *looking*. From the nontheistic point of view of the buddhadharma, we could safely say that first we *look* and then we *see*. Whether we are executing a work of art or witnessing one, first we *look* and then we *see*.

From the theistic point of view, it may be said that first we *see* and then we *look*, which is an interesting reversal, or double take. The problem with that approach is that when we *see*, we are also trying to *look*, and we have no idea what we are trying to look at. If we look everywhere, we may come up with a good answer—but it is quite likely that we will come up with no answer. We are confused because we first saw something and then we tried to look at it, which is like trying to catch a fish with our bare hands. It is a very slippery situation, trying to catch the phenomenal world in that way. The phenomenal world is not all that pliable. Each time we try to grasp it, we lose it, and sometimes we miss altogether. We might be trying to hold on to the wrong end of the stick. It's very funny, but it's very sad, too.

The notion of looking at things as they are is a very important concept. We cannot even call it a concept, it is an experience. Look! Why do we look at all? Or we could say, Listen! Why do we listen at all? Why do we feel at all? Why do we taste? The one and only answer is that there is such a thing as inquisitiveness in our makeup. Inquisitiveness is the seed syllable of the artist. The artist is interested in sight, sound, feelings, and touchable objects. We are interested and we are inquisitive, very inquisitive, and we are willing to explore in any way we can. We appreciate purple, blue, red, white, yellow, violet. When we see them, we are so interested. Nobody knows why, but purple looks good and sounds good, and red sounds and looks good. And we discover the different shades of each color as well. We appreciate colors as we hear them, as we feel them. Such tremendous inquisitiveness is the key point in the way we look at things, because with inquisitiveness we have a connection.

We as human beings each have a particular kind of body. We have certain sense organs, such as eyes, noses, ears, mouths, and tongues, to experience the different levels of sense perceptions. And our minds, basically speaking, can communicate thoroughly and properly through any one of those sense organs. But there is a problem of synchronizing body and mind only within the particular area connected with a person's work of art. For example, a person could be a fantastic painter but a bad

writer, or a good musician but a bad sculptor. We should not say that we are being punished or that we have no possibilities of correcting or improving that situation. Instead, by training ourselves in the practice of meditation and by training ourselves in the understanding of art as a fundamental and basic discipline, we could learn to synchronize our mind and body completely. Then, ideally speaking, we could accomplish any artistic discipline. Our mind and body have hundreds of thousands of shortcomings, but they are not regarded as punishment or as original sin. Instead they can be corrected and our mind and body synchronized properly. In doing so the first step is learning how to look, how to listen, how to feel. By learning how to look, we begin to discover how to see; by learning how to listen, we learn how to hear; by learning how to feel, we learn how to experience.

To begin with, we need to understand the general projection of the first perception, when you first look. The reason you are compelled to look is because of your inquisitiveness, and because of your inquisitiveness, you begin to see things. Usually, in nontheistic discipline, you look first and then you see things. Looking is prajna, intellect; seeing is wisdom [jnana]. After that you find your heaven principle. Heaven is the definite discovery of the product of what you are looking for, what you are seeing. This analysis is very scientific; it has been described in the abhidharma teachings of Buddhist philosophy. When sense objects and sense perceptions and sense organs meet, and they begin to be synchronized, you let yourself go a little further; you open yourself. It is like a camera aperture: your lens is open at that point. Then you see things, and they reflect into your state of mind. After that, you make a decision that what you've seen is either desirable or undesirable—and you make further decisions after that. That seems to be the basic idea of how a perceiver looks at a work of art.

The heaven, earth, and man principle could be applied to this process of perception. Having looked, you see the big thing first. This does not mean that you see a monolithic object or hear a monolithic sound: you may see a little flea or a gigantic mountain—from this perspective, they are the same. It is simply the first perception of *that,* which sets the foundation. That is the heaven principle. In discussing the creation of art, first thought is the second principle, or earth. But from the viewpoint of the perceiver of art, first thought is heaven. That big thing, that initial perception, breaks through your subconscious gossip. Sometimes it is

shocking, sometimes it is pleasant, but whatever the case, a big thing happens—*that*—which is heaven. In the ikebana tradition, heaven is the first branch you place in your kenzan, the principal branch. It may be a breakthrough, maybe not quite.

After that, you have earth, which is a confirmation of that big thing. Earth allows the heaven principle to be legitimate, in the sense that it is your initial perception which allows you to do that second thing. As this second action is in accordance with your first perception, therefore your initial perception becomes legitimate and complementary.

Having organized heaven and earth together, you feel at ease and comfortable. So you add the man principle as the third situation, which makes you feel, "Whew! Wow, I've done it!" You could generate little messages or little bits of playful information, which makes the whole situation simple and straight—and also jazzes it up, decorates it. All these little touches are expressions of inquisitiveness, as well as expressions that because you looked, because you listened, therefore you saw, therefore you heard.

We are trying to work with that general principle of heaven, earth, and man. It takes a long time to learn not to jump the gun. Usually we are very impatient. We have a tremendous tendency to look for a quick discovery or for proof that what we have done is good, that we have discovered something, that we have made it, that it worked, that it is marketable, and so forth. But none of those impatient approaches show any understanding of looking and seeing at all.

The general approach of heaven, earth, and man is that things have to be done on a grand scale, whether you like it or not, with tremendous preparation. Ideally, you have to experience the basic ground in which situations are clean, workable, and pliable, in which all the implements are there. You do not try to cover up when an emergency occurs: you do not run to the closest supermarket to purchase Band-Aids or Scotch Tape or aspirin.

For the general work or discipline of art, both as students perceive it and as artists conduct themselves in its creation, there needs to be a good environment. The preparation of the environment is very important. In order to ride your horse, you have to have a good saddle as well as a good horse, if you can afford to buy one. In order to paint on canvas, you have to have a good brush and good paints and a good studio. Trying to ignore this inconvenience, working in your mouse hole or in your

basement, might have worked for people in medieval times, but in the twentieth century it doesn't. If you take that approach, you might be regarded as a veteran because you were willing to survive the dirt in order to present your glorious art, but unfortunately, very few artists who live like that come up with good results. Instead, many of them develop tremendous negativity and resentment toward society. Their resentment starts with their landlords, because they have had to work on their fantastic works of art in cold, damp basements for so many hours. Then they complain to their friends, who have never acknowledged or experienced what they have gone through. Then they begin to develop further complaints toward their world in general and toward their teacher. They begin to build up all sorts of garbage and negativity that way.

Some room for self-respect in a work of art is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, the implements we use in creating a work of art are regarded as sacred. If we were completely oppressed, if we had been persecuted to the extent that we could not even show our work of art, we might have to do it in a dungeon—but we are not facing that yet. We can afford to rise and take pleasure in what we are doing. We can have respect for what we are doing and appreciate the sacredness of the whole thing.

In discussing the principle of heaven, earth, and man, we are working on how the structure of perception relates with one's sense fields, so to speak. We are talking in terms of a basic state of mind in which we have already developed a notion of ourselves and our communication with others. When others are working with us and we are working with them, there is a general sense of play back and forth and also some sense of basic existence. Where do such situations come from? They come from our practice of meditation. We no longer regard a work of art as a gimmick or as confirmation, it is simply expression—not even self-expression, just expression. We could safely say that there is such a thing as unconditional expression that does not come from self or other. It manifests out of nowhere like mushrooms in a meadow, like hailstones, like thundershowers.

The basic sense of delight and spontaneity in a person who has opened fully and thoroughly to himself and life can provide wonderful rainbows and thundershowers and gusts of wind. We don't have to be tied down to the greasy-spoon world of well-meaning artists with their heavy-handed looks on their faces and overfed information in their brains. The basic idea of dharma art is the sense of peace and the refresh-

ing coolness of the absence of neurosis. If there is no refreshing coolness, you are unable even to lift up your brush to paint on your canvas. You find that your brush weighs ten thousand tons. You are weighted down by your depression and laziness and neurosis. On the other hand, you cannot take what's known as "poetic license," doing everything free-style. That would be like hoping that the rock you throw at night will land on your enemy's head.

4. The Mandala of the Four Karmas

"The entire Tibetan vajrayana iconography is based on this particular mandala principle. It works and did work and will work."

The principle of heaven, earth, and man could be illustrated by means of a series of diagrams.

The heaven, earth, and man arrangement can exist on the basis of two situations. The first is that the innate nature of heaven, earth, and man exists in us as basic talent. This innate nature that we are going to work on is connected with a particular shape, the circle. The basic, innate nature of our existence and sense of perception is the circle.

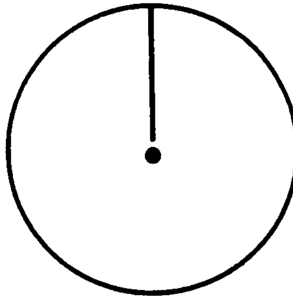
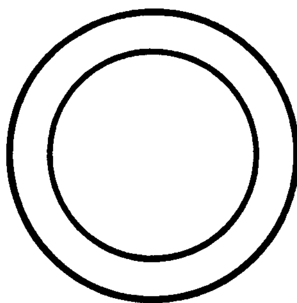


Diagram 1.

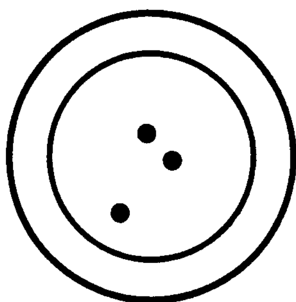
Then there is the sense of first dot, which is expanded with a line coming from that dot. First dot is best dot! The basic idea here is that the blank space is heaven and the first dot is earth. On the other hand, we could also talk about the whole thing, the first dot surrounded by a circle, as being the heaven principle.



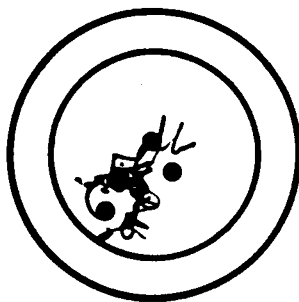
Pacifying 1.

Within that first dot concept, we have a basic circle, as you can see. The circle is the idea of the basic innate nature of the heaven, earth, and man principle. The outer circle represents mind, and the inner circle represents energy. So the perimeter is thought, and the inner circle is a particular type of energy.

According to the vajrayana tradition, four basic types of energies exist, called the four karmas, or actions. The round shape of the inner circle represents gentleness and innate goodness. This is the first karma, which is the principle of peace, or pacifying. Innate goodness possesses gentleness and is absent of neurosis. These things could be experienced.



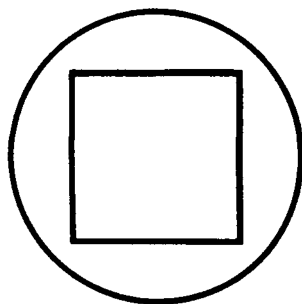
Pacifying 2.



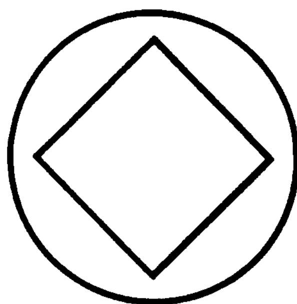
Pacifying 3.

Suppose we place the heaven, earth, and man principle on this particular ground. The placement of heaven, earth, and man complements the circles, particularly the inner circle. There is a sense of no neurosis and

a sense of gentleness. But if we have more than this happening, it becomes very confusing. There is no gentleness because there are so many things going on.



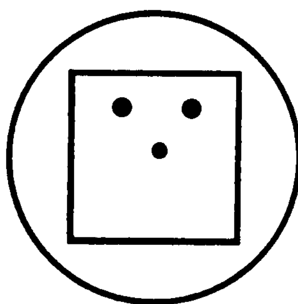
Enriching 1.



Enriching 2.

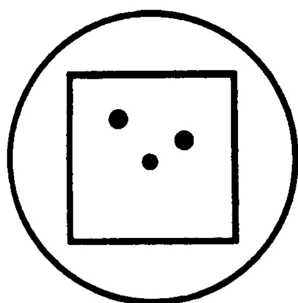
Again you see a circle on the perimeter, representing manifested mind, the mental state of being, but in this case there is a square in the middle, which is the energy field of the second karma, the enriching principle.

If we turn it, it gives an entirely different effect. We begin to realize that there are too many sharp angles. But if we keep it the original way, it has a sense of being, of harmony, a well-settled situation. Enriching is the intrinsic energy of our state of mind. It is the idea of dignity, or in Tibetan, *ziji*.

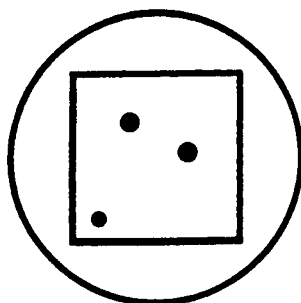


Enriching 3.

Within that enriching situation, we could have a perfect heaven and earth side by side, which complements the squareness of enriching, the earthiness of it. And we could even put a little man in it; there is still a sense of dignity.



Enriching 4.

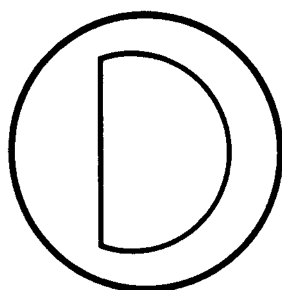


Enriching 5.

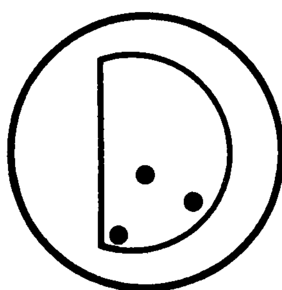
If we want to place more emphasis, we could change it like this [as in Enriching 4]. Or we could make the man principle larger [as in Enriching 5]. Perfect! It possesses dignity.

Now we have more or less a half circle, which is the idea of the third karma, or magnetizing. Within our intrinsic nature, magnetizing is basic richness. It is also the idea of letting go, daring to let go. [See Magnetizing 1.]

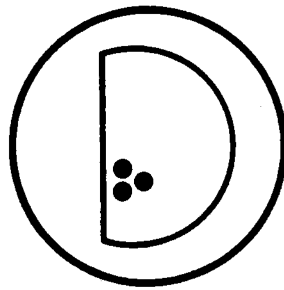
The heaven, earth, and man principle goes along with that. It is the



Magnetizing 1.



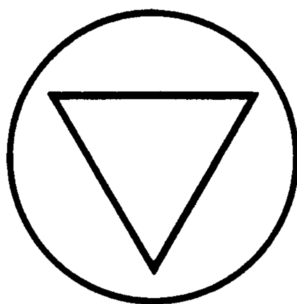
Magnetizing 2.



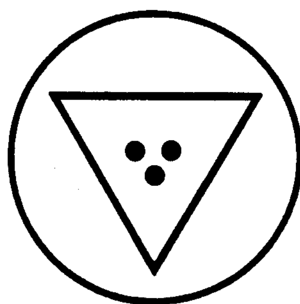
Magnetizing 3.

idea that once there is a sense of richness and of no poverty, we can let go, give away, be generous. This is the source of the magnetizing principle. [See Magnetizing 2.]

On the other hand, if we put everything together and jump off the edge, we have miserliness, holding on to the purse strings very tightly and not wanting to give anything away. We want to jump off the cliff before we have to give somebody even half a penny. [See Magnetizing 3.]



Destroying 1.

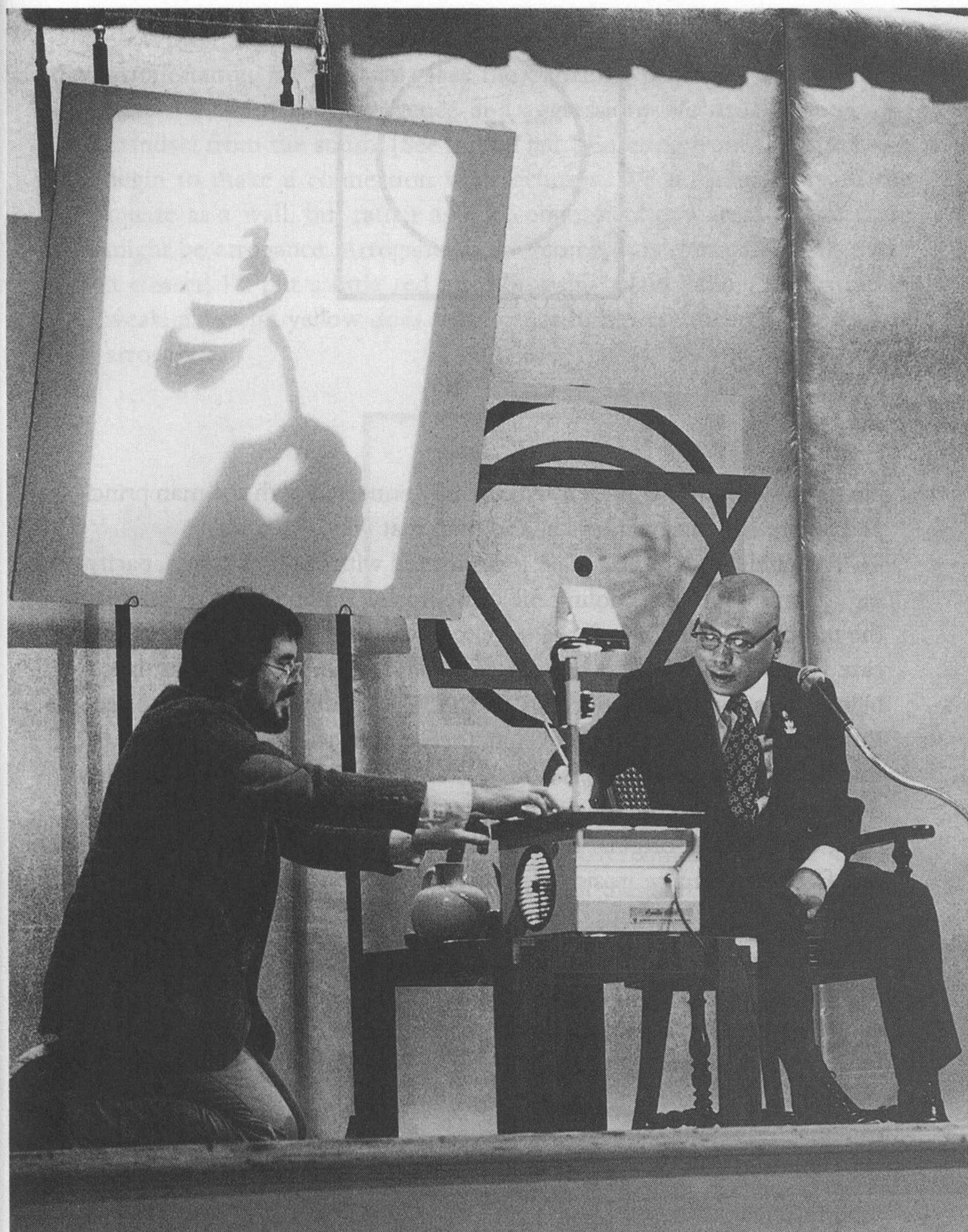


Destroying 2.

The fourth karma is the heavy one—destruction. Its basic, inherent nature is fearless. The notion of balance comes along with that, because if there is too little fearlessness, you might be a coward, and if there is too much fearlessness, everything is too intellectual. So we have a basic point of balance. [See Destroying 1.] We could place heaven, earth, and man right in the middle. If we organize it that way, there is lots of humor as well as fearlessness. [See Destroying 2.]

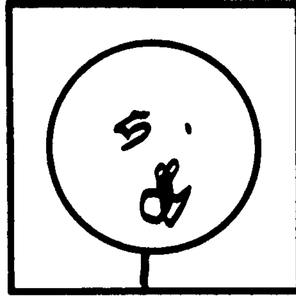
Having introduced the four karmas, we can now discuss the manifestation of the four karmas. This has to do with how we actually work with these four principles. The idea of fully manifesting the karmas is represented by placing the characteristic shape of each of the four karmas within a square background.

The square represents manifestation. In a traditional mandala diagram, within the architecture of the mandala, the square represents the courtyard. It is also the earth principle. Previously we discussed the circle as heaven, or the "first thought" principle. Now we have an earth princi-



Spontaneous calligraphy on overhead projector. Los Angeles Dharma Art Seminar.

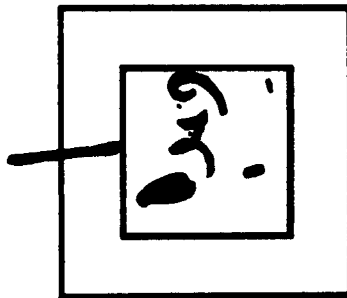
PHOTO BY ANDREA ROTH, 1980. FROM THE COLLECTION OF SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



Pacifying.

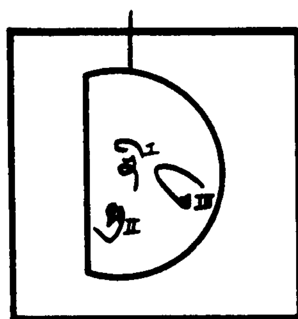
ple to go with it. The inner drawings are connected with the man principle. So we have heaven, earth, and man that way.

The circle within the square is connected with the first karma, pacifying. It represents the cooling off of neurosis. Traditionally, to relate to the principle of cooling off, we have to enter from the east, which in this case is down. [See line at bottom of circle. In Tibetan mandalas, east is below, west is on top, north is to the right, and south is to the left.] Entering from the east, we develop a sense of peace and coolness. In the middle, slightly off-center, is a cool situation, which cools off the boredom and heat of neurosis. [*Vidyadhara draws symbols in blue.*] It is pure, blue, cool. So the original manifestation, that of pacifying, is gentleness and freedom from neurosis. It is pure and cool.



Enriching.

Within the same square shape, the same kind of wall, representing manifestation, we also can place the enriching principle, which is basically the absence of arrogance and aggression. We usually enter this mandala from the south. [See line at left.] Entering from the south, we begin to make a connection with richness. We no longer regard the square as a wall, but rather as our conquest of any areas where there might be arrogance. Arrogance is overcome, it is transparent. To make it clearer, I'll put a little red into the paint; plain yellow seems rather weak, although yellow does make sense in representing the absence of arrogance.

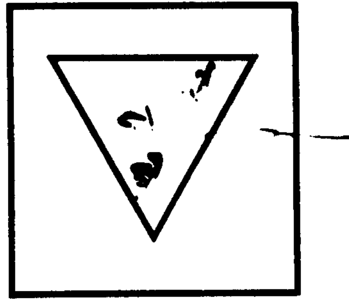


Magnetizing.

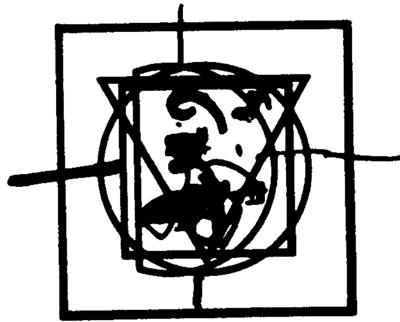
The basic principle of magnetizing is overcoming poverty. We approach it from the west. [See line at top of diagram.] Maybe this is too mysterious, but here are heaven, earth, and man. [*Vidyadhara draws symbols in red on diagram.*] It is free from poverty. It is very hard to say *why* all these things work, but it makes sense when you look at them properly, when you have some sense of visual perspective. So, ladies and gentlemen, it is up to you, and it is very traditional.

[*Vidyadhara draws symbols in green.*] In the manifestation of the fourth karma, destruction, we enter this particular energy field from the north. [See line at the right.] The background may be slightly problematic because it is supposed to come down a little further, but it gives you some idea of the principle of this karma, which is the destruction of laziness.

If we put all of the second series of diagrams together, we begin to have some idea of the whole thing. East represents awake; south represents expansion; west represents passion or magnetizing; north repre-



Destroying.



Mandala 1.

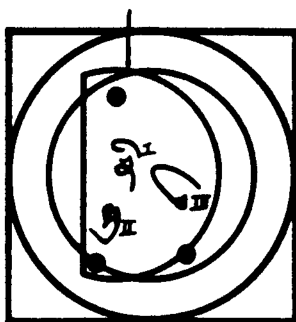
sents action. That seems to be the basic mandala principle that has developed.

[*Vidyadhara overlays original dot and circle over the four.*] On top of that we could add two lines that represent the psychological state of being; that is how far we could get into it. We are working toward the center and then, having become a practitioner, we go through the whole thing. [*Vidyadhara draws line completely across diagram.*] That is the basic visual diagram of the whole path, starting from hinayana, through mahayana, into vajrayana.

First of all, students enter from the east because they want to be relieved of their pain, they want to be peaceful. They enter from the

south because they would also like to have some sense of richness in them, having already entered the path. They enter from the west because they would like to make a relationship with their community members, the sangha. They enter from the north because they would also like to activate or motivate working with the sangha. So apart from the artistic arrangement, there is a sociological setup that goes with the mandala principle as well. We can actually operate from this basic mandala principle—in flower arranging, horseback riding, dishwashing, and all the rest.

This final diagram is everything put together. It looks rather confusing in the middle, but it makes sense because we have the principles, and [displaying original dot and circle] we have the psychological state of being—why we want to become sane at all. It might look very confusing, but it might make sense. The entire Tibetan vajrayana iconography is based on this particular mandala principle. It works and did work and will work. It is quite obvious that it is possible to work with it.



Mandala 2.

There is always room to find your spot [the heaven principle]. And then from that particular spot you can branch out, which is the earth and man principle. Don't panic. We can do it that way.

This discussion is not as abstract as you might think; it is more visual. It is worthwhile looking into these diagrams and colors as you study the basic principles. You might find these diagrams confusing, but if you look at them and develop your own diagrams and play with them, you might find that there is a reference point, and that the whole thing makes sense.

5. DISCIPLINE

> *"The concept of synchronizing body and mind is a total one, related to whatever work of art you execute or whatever life you lead."*

As you know already, the notion of space and its relationship to the artist's point of view is very important. The temperature of that space, the coolness and absence of the heat of neurosis, also is very important as the background to our discussion. With that foundation, we also have the possibility of no longer freelancing, but educating ourselves through discipline, which is one of the foremost factors in the growing-up process. It all becomes a further learning situation: working with our world, our life, and our livelihood, as well as our art. Art is regarded as a way of life altogether, not necessarily as a trade or business.

We already talked about having a correct understanding of the work of art and not polluting the whole world by our artwork. We are trying to work to create a decent society where the work of art is respected and regarded as very sacred and does not become completely mercenary. On the other hand, certain artists have wanted to expand their vision and relate with as many people as possible. Quite possibly they did have a genuine reference point, and hundreds of thousands of people came along and appreciated their works of art. The question of how much restraint we should use and how much we should expand our vision and our energy to reach others is a very tricky one.

We are going to go back and reiterate the concept of heaven, earth, and man once more, in connection with what we have discussed already. The heaven, earth, and man principle that we are going to discuss will be accompanied by some on-the-spot calligraphies based on the principles of the four karmas: pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying.

In heaven, earth, and man, the first principle, as you know already, is heaven. It might be interesting for you to realize the psychological and physical implications of that principle in regard to executing a work of art. To begin with, the artist should have a feeling of connection with the brush or the musical instrument. Whatever medium you might use, you have a reference point to the body. This is connected with the idea of synchronizing body and mind. The concept of synchronizing body

and mind is a total one, related to whatever work of art you execute or whatever life you lead. The way you dress yourself, the way you brush your hair, the way you brush your teeth, the way you take your shower or bath, the way you sit on your toilet—all of those basic activities are works of art in themselves. Art is life, rather than a gimmick. That is what we are talking about, not how the Buddhist concept can be salable and merchandised. I would like to remind you again and again, in case you forget, that art in this sense includes your total experience. And within that the mind and body are relating together.

The suggestion that you practice sitting meditation before you execute a work of art is obviously a good one, but that does not mean that you have to become a Buddhist. It is simply that you can give yourself space, a gap where you can warm up and cool off all at once. That is ideal. If you do that, it will bring with it the notion of extending your mind by working through your sense perceptions. To extend our minds through our sense perceptions, we have to *use* our sense perceptions; in other words, use our bodies as vehicles. We could use the analogy of photography. We have a particular type of film, which represents the mind, and we put the film into a camera, which has different apertures and speeds, all of which represent the body. When the film and the camera—mind and body—coincide, then we at least have a good exposure: the film will react to light and we will have good, clear photography. But beyond that, there is also how we frame what we see, what kind of lens we use, and what composition we have in mind. The way we frame the picture is connected with the four karmas. It comes up once we have the settings and the film already in order.

Synchronizing body and mind is always the key. If we are artists, we have to live like artists. We have to treat our entire lives as our discipline. Otherwise we will be dilettante artists or, for that matter, schizophrenic artists. That has been a problem in the past, but hopefully we can correct that situation, so that artists live like the greatest practitioners, who see that there is no boundary between when they practice art and when they are not practicing art. The post-art and the actual art experience become one, just as postmeditation and meditation begin to become one. At that point the meditator or artist has greater scope to relate with his or her life completely and thoroughly. He or she has conquered the universe—overcome it somewhat. There is a tremendous cheerfulness and nothing

to regret, no sharp edges to fight with. So things become good and soothing and very workable—with a tremendous smile.

Another way of looking at the heaven principle is as total discipline, which is free from hope and fear. The general experience is no hope, no fear, and it comes in that particular order: first no hope, then no fear. At first we might have no idea what we are going to execute as our work of art. Usually, in executing art, we would like to produce something, but we are left with our implements, our accoutrements, and we have no idea how we are going to proceed or which tool to begin with. So no hope comes first. No hope comes first because we are not trying to achieve anything other than our basic livelihood. After that comes no fear, because there is no sense of an ideal model we should achieve. Therefore, there is no fear. Very simply, we could say, "We have nothing to lose."

When we have that attitude and motivation, we are victorious, because we are not afraid of falling into any dungeons, nor do we hope for any particular high point. There is a general sense of even-mindedness, which could also be called genuineness or decency. *Decency* is a very important word for artists because when we say, "*I'm* an artist," there is always a tinge of doubt. Maybe we are not telling the truth, but we might be making something up. So the whole principle of decency is trying to live up to that particular truth. We might be hopeful and we might be fearful. For instance, in modern society, many people are afraid of truth. That is why we find so many law firms willing to protect a lie. We can employ lawyers to support our lies and twists on the truth. A lot of lawyers make a lot of money that way. So lawyers and artists could both be questionable.

Being without fear and without hope, which is the heaven principle, provides a lot of freedom, a lot of space. It is not freedom in the sense of blatantly coming out with all sorts of self-styled expressions of imprisonment. Some people regard that as an expression of freedom. If they can clearly express their imprisonment, they begin to feel that they have made some kind of breakthrough. That can go on and on and on. People tried that approach in the fifties and sixties quite a lot in America. But they came back to square one in the seventies. Without getting into too much politics, here the notion of freedom is a letting-go process. There is enough room to express yourself. That is the definition of freedom. There

is room for you to demonstrate your free style—not that of imprisonment, but the possibility of freedom from imprisonment altogether.

The earth principle comes after that. Earth is usually regarded as very solid and stubborn, as something we think we can't be friendly toward. Digging soil takes a lot of effort and energy. But here there is a twist of logic: the earth principle is unobstructed; there is no obstacle. But we should not misunderstand this, thinking that the earth is pliable, that there is no ground to stand on, or that the earth will change. It all depends on our trip—or trips. Earth is somewhat solid, but at the same time earth can be penetrated very easily, with no obstructions. This is a very important point. Because it is related with the heaven principle of no hope and no fear, that actually brings down raindrops onto the earth, so earth can be penetrated, worked on. Because of that, there are possibilities of cultivating the earth and growing vegetation in it, and using it as a resource for cows to graze on. The possibilities are infinite.

But something is missing from the logic of the relationship between heaven and earth. The heaven principle of no hope and no fear could become very dry and too logical. We need some kind of warmth coming from heaven as well. If you put no hope and no fear together, that mounts up almost mathematically into tremendous warmth and love. Therefore when we have heaven, we could have raindrops coming down, making a sympathetic connection with earth. When that connection takes place, things are not so cut and dried. The more that relationship comes down from heaven, the more the earth begins to yield. Therefore the earth becomes gentle and soft and pliable, and can actually produce greenery.

Then we have man, which is connected with both those principles: being without hope and without fear, and being unobstructed. Man can survive with the mercy of heaven and earth and have a good relationship with both of them. It is almost a traditional, scientific truth that when heaven and earth have a good relationship, man has a good relationship with them. When heaven and earth are fighting, there is drought and starvation. All kinds of problems come from the conflict between heaven and earth. Whenever there is that kind of conflict, men and women begin to have doubts about their king, who is supposed to have the power to join heaven and earth but is not quite able to do so, as in the

Judeo-Christian story of King David. Whenever there is plenty of rain and plenty of greenery, men feel that their king is worthwhile.

The man principle is known as simplicity: freedom from concepts, freedom from trappings. Men could actually enjoy the freedom from hope and fear of heaven and the pliability of earth. Therefore they could live together and relate to one another. The idea of the sky falling on their heads is no longer a threat. They know that the sky will always be there and that the earth will always be there. There is no fear that the sky and earth are going to chew man up and eat him. A lot of the fear of natural disasters comes out of man's distrust of heaven and earth and of the four seasons working harmoniously together. When there is no fear, man begins to join in, as he deserves, living in this world. He has heaven above and earth below and he begins to appreciate the trees and greenery, bananas, oranges, and what have you.

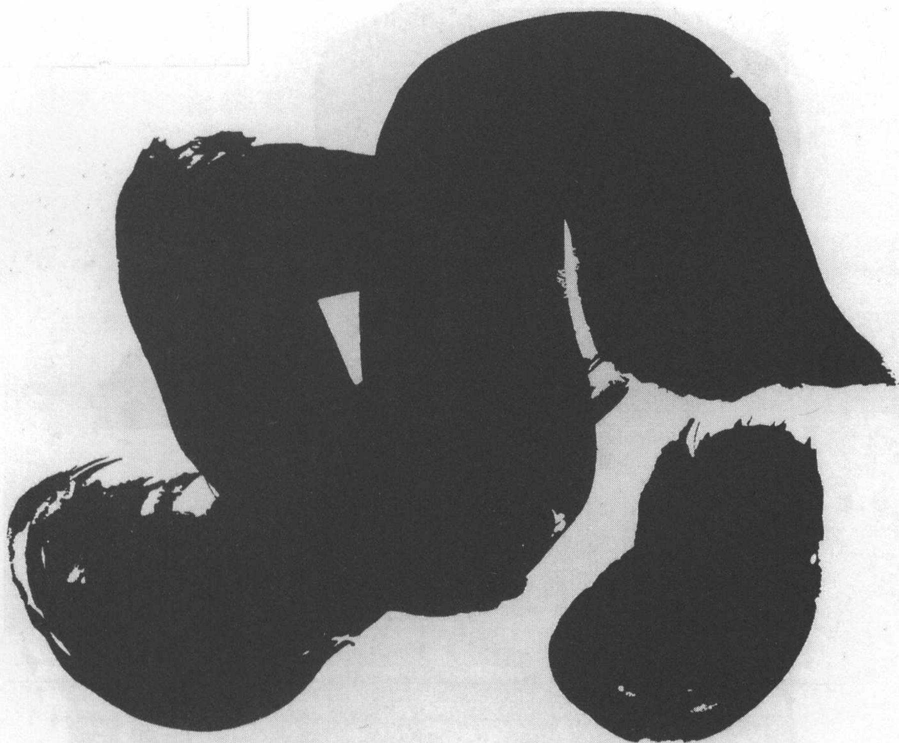
In connection with the heaven, earth, and man principle, we have a fourth category, that of the four karmas. We are free from acceptance and rejection when we begin to realize pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying as the natural expression of our desire to work with the whole universe. We are free from accepting too eagerly or rejecting too violently; we are free from push and pull. In Buddhism that freedom is known as the mandala principle, in which everything is moderated by those four activities. You can express heaven and earth as pacifying or enriching or magnetizing or destroying: all four karmas are connected with joining heaven and earth. Because we are free from acceptance and rejection there is a basic notion of how we can handle the whole world. So the idea of the four karmas is not so much how we can handle ourselves, particularly, but it is how we can relate with the radiation coming out of the heaven, earth, and man principle. For example, if you are sitting on a meditation cushion, you can see how large a radius you cover around yourself and your neighbors, and the relationships connected with that.

At this point we could execute a few calligraphies connected with the heaven, earth, and man principle and with the four karmas. The brush I am using tonight is not trained yet—it's been waiting here a long time in this hot climate, and it hasn't been soaked in water yet. But we'll see what we can do. [*Vidyadhara begins to execute calligraphies.*]

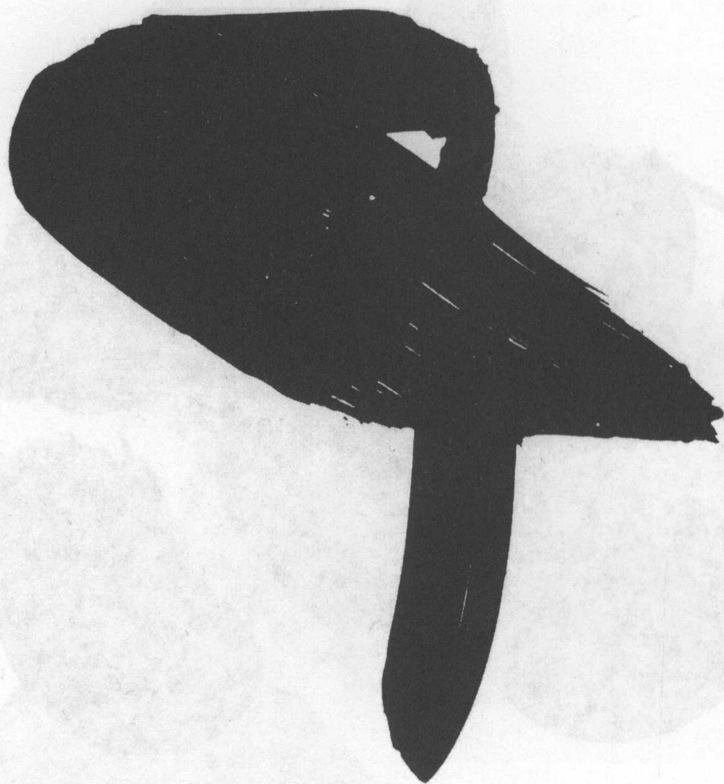


First, we go through the process of pacifying, in connection with the heaven, earth, and man principle.

With enriching we begin from the south. It takes time to do the calligraphy in the form of a rabbit's jump.



Magnetizing is very delicate and very difficult, quite difficult. I wonder if I should do it at all. It begins from the west. The sense of seduction lies in the rhythm; at the same time it is genuine seduction.



Now destruction. It's very simple. We take our brush stroke from the north, the direction of the karma family. It is clean cut, as if you were running into Wilkinson's sword—or for that matter, Kiku Masamune (a brand of sake). It cuts in all directions. Very simple.



We could execute a calligraphy for joining heaven and earth together. It might be a little calligraphy, quite a tiny one, maybe a very humble one. We begin in the west and go toward the east.

6. Art and Society

"In dharma art, what we are trying to do is to tame our society, including ourselves."

On a larger level, dharma art is connected with the idea of how to clean up setting-sun vision [the small world of aggression, passion, and ignorance] and transform it into what is known as Great Eastern Sun vision. That is our purpose altogether. The idea of Great Eastern Sun in this context has nothing to do with chauvinism or aggression. Ironically, the words that we have come up with to describe Great Eastern Sun—humbleness and genuineness—are the opposite of chauvinism and aggression. Other qualities associated with Great Eastern Sun are a sense of precision, warmth, kindness, and gentleness. Such humbleness, gentleness, kindness, and warmth are all very important for us as artists and as ordinary decent human beings.

Another term connected with dharma art is "positive arrogance." From the dictionary's point of view, positive arrogance sounds contradictory, but from an experiential point of view, there is a lot of room for positive arrogance. In fact, the whole heaven, earth, and man principle is a presentation of positive arrogance. At the beginning, we might not have any idea what we are going to execute on our drawing boards, our notepads, or on our canvases. We might feel lost. But something suddenly perks us up, which is positive arrogance. That arrogance has nothing to do with chauvinism. Chauvinism is one-sided: you support either this side or that side, this or that, me or them. With positive arrogance, chauvinism doesn't come into the picture at all.

The basic vision is that we would like to organize and create a decent society. We could be slightly, positively arrogant by even saying "enlightened society." Can we take that much arrogance? Shall we say it or not? We are not particularly afraid of saying enlightened society; at the same time, we do not want to offend any of you. You might think that enlightened society means something very haughty and unreasonable and aggressive. Obviously we have to go step by step in creating an enlightened society. We can't approach it like putting up a tent on the spot, right away. Creating such a society will be a journey for each one of us, myself included. It will be a very slow journey, to begin with. The first part of the journey will be very, very slow, and it will be difficult to see

the progress we are making. We might question whether we are making progress at all. But as we take this very slow journey, we begin to realize that progress is not a question anymore. We begin to see, "Ah, something's taking place!" There is a flash of goodness taking place in our perspective. We begin to develop a wonderful sense of head and shoulders as we practice, as we become authentic artists. We begin to take pride in that. That pride could be connected with enlightenment.

We can make the journey. We do not fool ourselves with concepts and ideas. There is evidence for that in the past, and we can always refer back to the 2,500-year history of Buddhist success, Buddhist vision. Buddhist vision has always been built on this kind of slow journey, which finally makes sense and begins to create tremendous sparks, tremendous explosions, unexpectedly. Sometimes you might think that certain areas or corners are not worth investigating, and you just let them go. But suddenly, to your surprise, you begin to see that the very corner you have neglected has a spark, here and there, all the time. That spark is known as the spark of enlightened society.

I would like you to develop basic gentleness and kindness in yourselves as artists and in your audience, whoever they may be. To begin with, please don't push your trips, and please be gentle to yourselves. Every calligraphy you have seen and all the explanations you have heard represent that vision of gentleness, which has several shades: gray gentleness, maybe silver gray; red gentleness, very red like an open wound; gray green gentleness, which complements the redness of the flash and the basic silver gray, and in turn the redness begins to shine through. Suppose you have an arrangement of colors which is basically silver gray, and you add some areas of green gray. It sounds terrible, doesn't it? But if you actually do that in a color arrangement, you will find that it produces a dynamic situation.

The four karmas are a very interesting point of reference. As you know, the shapes of the four karmas are connected with the colors blue, yellow, red, and green. If we simplify that color perspective by combining those four colors into two—the ideal, traditional result is lemon yellow and purple. Those two colors were the imperial colors in the courts of China, Japan, Korea, and India, and in the empire of Ashoka as well. The lemon yellow [number 116 in the PMS color chart used by designers] is traditionally a high-class yellow, connected with strength and the father, or king, principle. And the particular shade of purple [number 266

in the PMS color chart] is considered to be a high-class purple. It is the ultimate idea of the feminine, or queen, principle. When the masculine principle and the feminine principle are joined together, you have the complete accomplishment of all four karmas—pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying. Everything is accomplished that way. You might wonder why and how everything is accomplished in that way. I don't think I can actually give you any answer to that. Obviously I could cook up some scientific reasons, but I don't think that is the point. The idea is that you should actually see those colors and put them together.

The whole purpose is to soothe aggression and passion and ignorance. Everybody wants to learn so much and wants to do their best. Such enthusiasm and exertion might be all right, but on the other hand, it could become a killer. If you relate with situations too intensely, you begin to lose the gentleness and genuineness which are the essence of art. In dharma art, what we are trying to do is to tame our society, including ourselves, if I may say so. We could be more decent and less experimental, in the sense that we don't use a lot of aggressive ways to try to prove our theories. Instead, we learn to relax and settle down into our discipline, whatever we are doing—whether we are making films or riding horses, whether we are photographers, painters, musicians, landscapers, or interior decorators. In this way of thinking, a linguist or scientist is also an artist. Scientific research is regarded as a work of art because scientific discipline also needs tremendous gentleness. Otherwise it becomes a way of experimenting with the universe, in which you cut everybody down and open their lungs and hearts on the clean carpet of your drawing room.

We have tremendous integrity and a scheme, if you like, to make our world and our understanding workable. The only thing we want to do is to invite human beings to take part in something very real and gentle and beautiful, all at the same time. There is often a problem with the traditional scientific or business mentality, because although it might suggest how to succeed, it lacks knowledge of how to make friends, or how to be warm. That becomes a tremendous obstacle. When we begin to realize how to become warm and to make friends with our world—when that kind of breakthrough takes place—then there is no problem at all in introducing buddhadharma into our art.

The essence of buddhadharma is compassion and kindness, one of the fundamental components of enlightened mind. Enlightened mind

consists of *prajna*, or "discriminating awareness," and karuna, or friendship and kindness. When there is both kindness and discriminating awareness, you have a complete outfit, so to speak. You have acquired a pair of spectacles with a good prescription and also clean. Then you can look through them at your world.

We have to be so genuine and gentle. Otherwise there is no way to work with the universe at all. You have a tremendous responsibility: the first is to yourself, to become gentle and genuine; the second is to work for others in that same way. It is very important to realize how powerful all of us are. What we are doing may seem insignificant, but this notion of dharma art will be like an atomic bomb you carry in your mind. You could play a tremendous role in developing peace throughout the world.



SELECTED CALLIGRAPHIES

བློ་ཆོས་སུ་འགྲོ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས།

ཆོས་ལམ་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས།

ལམ་འཁྲུལ་པ་སེལ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས།

འཁྲུལ་པ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སུ་ཤར་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རློབས།།

ཨཱཿ

Grant your blessings so that my mind may be one
with the dharma.
Grant your blessings so that dharma may progress
along the path.
Grant your blessings so that the path may clarify
confusion.
Grant your blessings so that confusion may dawn
as wisdom.

AH

"The Four Dharmas of Gampopa" is a traditional daily chant, evoking the heart of the spiritual path in a few pithy phrases.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

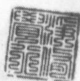
"You take refuge in the Buddha not as a savior—not with the feeling that you have found something to make you secure—but as an example, as someone you can emulate. . . . Then you take refuge in the teachings of the Buddha—the dharma—as path. . . . Having taken refuge in the Buddha as an example and the dharma as path, you take refuge in the sangha as companionship. . . . The three jewels—the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha—become a part of your existence and you thrive on that, you work with that, you live on that."



ཧཱུྃ

Hum

"In the boundless space of suchness, ༔
In the play of the great light, ༔
All the miracles of sight, sound, and mind ༔
Are the five wisdoms and the five buddhas. ༔
This is the mandala which is never arranged but
is always complete." ༔

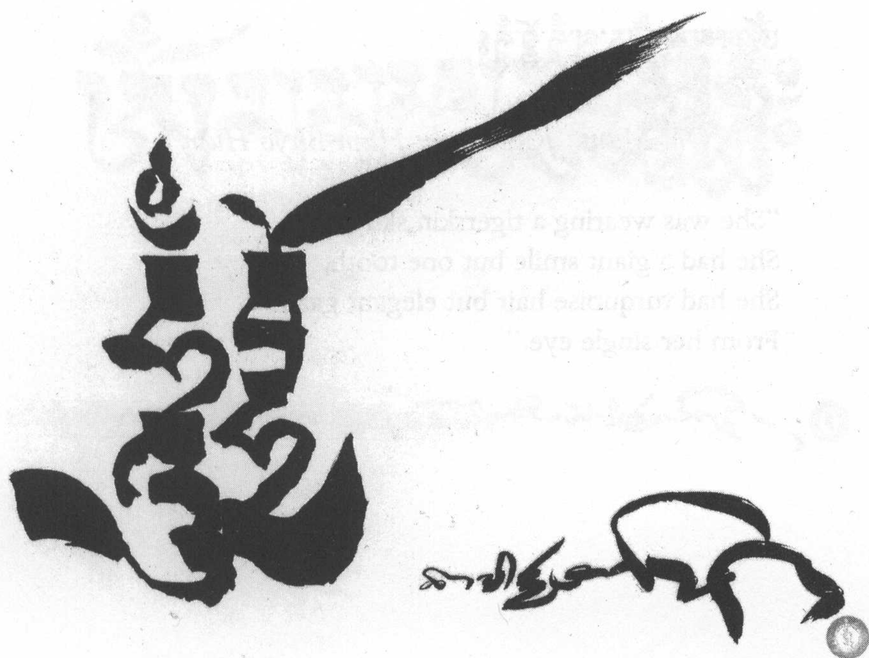




Hum Bhyo

"The simultaneous experience of confusion and sanity, or being asleep and awake, is the realization of coemergent wisdom. Any occurrence in one's state of mind—any thought, feeling, or emotion—is both black and white; it is both a statement of confusion and a message of enlightened mind. Confusion is seen so clearly that this clarity itself is sacred outlook."

The two seed syllables HUM and BHYO evoke the union of the masculine and feminine dharma-protection principles.



ཨོཾ་མ་མ་རུ་ལུ་རུ་ལུ་ཧཱུྃ་བྷྱོ་ཧཱུྃ༔

Om Mama Rulu Rulu Hum Bhyo Hum ༔

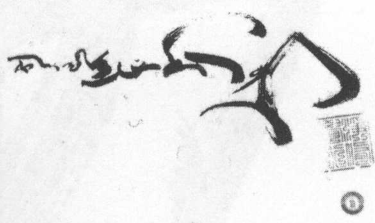
"She was wearing a tigerskin skirt,
She had a giant smile but one tooth,
She had turquoise hair but elegant gaze
From her single eye."

The mantra of Ekajati, protectress of the seventeen higher tantras. Trungpa Rinpoche regarded Ekajati to be the protector of the Karmê Chöling Meditation Center in particular, and Karmê Chöling residents include her liturgy in their daily chants.

ཨོཾ་ཨ་ར་པ་ཙ་ན་དྷཱིཿ

"A crow is black
Because the lotus is white.
Ants run fast
Because the elephant is slow.
Buddha was profound;
Sentient beings are confused."





"Since there is already such space and openness and the total absence of fear, the play of the wisdoms is a natural process."

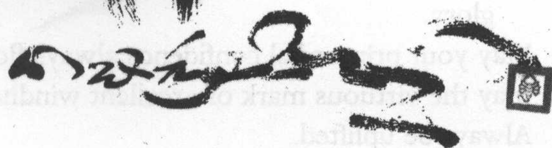


ཉི་མ།

Sun

"The Great Eastern Sun illuminates the way of discipline for the warrior. An analogy for that is the beams of light you see when you look at the sunrise. The rays of light coming toward you almost seem to provide a pathway for you to walk on. In the same way, the Great Eastern Sun creates an atmosphere in which you can constantly move forward, recharging energy all the time."





དགྲ་བླ།
གནམ་ས་གཅིག་ཏུ་སྦྲེལ་བའི་ཕྱིར།
དོན་གྱི་དཔའ་བོ་མི་འགྱུར་བས།
རྟག་ཏུ་ཁྱོད་ལ་སྐྱོང་གྱུར་ཅིག
ཚེ་རིང་ནད་མེད་དཔལ་དང་ལྡན།
གདོད་མའི་གཟི་བརྗིད་ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱས།
དགེ་མཚན་རླུང་རྟ་བཟང་པོ་ཡི།
དབུ་འཕང་རྟག་ཏུ་མཐོ་བར་ཤོག།

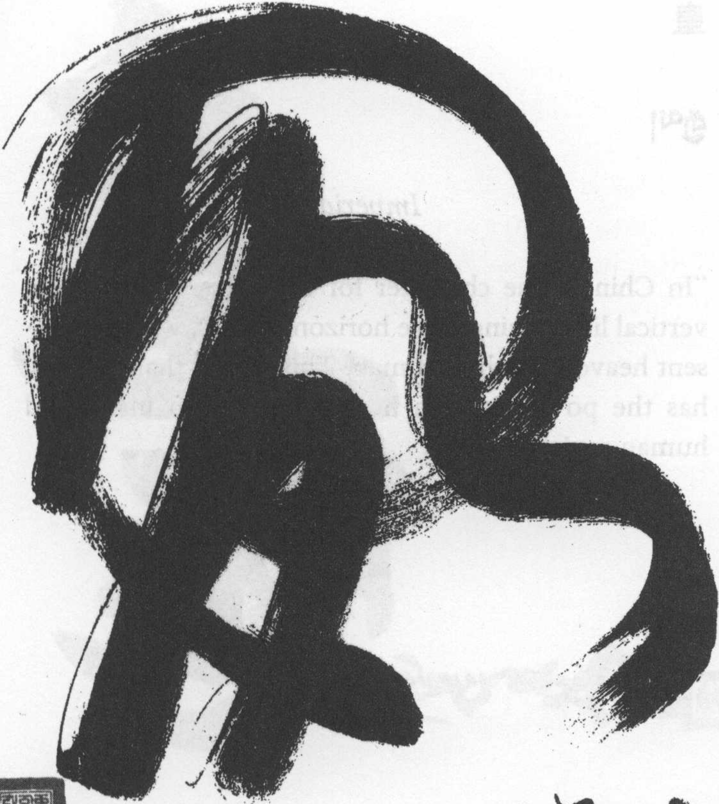
Drala ("Beyond aggression")

In order to join heaven and earth,
May the ultimate, unchanging warrior
Always protect you.
May you have long life, freedom from sickness, and glory.
May your primordial confidence always flourish.
May the virtuous mark of excellent windhorse
Always be uplifted.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

"Garuda is the mighty force of creation and
destruction.
He acts unerringly and will not hesitate.
The children of Shambhala will follow the pattern of
his swooping and wheeling
And the two opposing forces will come to balance one
another in perfect harmony.
That is the future of mankind."





皇

རྒྱལ།

Imperial

"In Chinese the character for the ruler, or king, is a vertical line joining three horizontal lines, which represent heaven, earth, and man. This means that the king has the power to join heaven and earth in a good human society."



གནམ་ས་མི།

Heaven, Earth, and Man

"Heaven is the source of the rain that falls on the earth, so heaven has a sympathetic connection with earth. When that connection is made, then the earth begins to yield. It becomes gentle and soft and pliable, so that greenery can grow on it, and man can cultivate it."

[illegible]

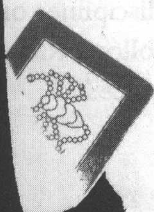
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རྡོ་རྗེ་དབྱིངས་ཀཱ་ན་ཊ།

Vajradhatu Canada

"From space without beginning or end,
The fire without center or fringe blazes.
The splendor of wisdom radiates beauty.
At this moment, Vajradhatu dawns."







"Crazy wisdom is absolute perceptiveness, with fearlessness and bluntness. Fundamentally, it is being wise, but not holding to particular doctrines or disciplines or formats. There aren't any books to follow. Rather, there is endless spontaneity taking place."







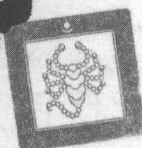
ཐོག་མ་ཐ་མ་མི་དམིགས།
སྟག་སེང་ཁྱུང་འབྲུག་དཔལ་དང་ལྡན།
བརྗོད་ལས་འདས་པའི་གཟི་བརྗིད་ཅན།
རིག་ལྡན་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཞབས་ལ་འདུད།།

神 དགྲ་ལྷ།

He who has neither beginning nor end,
Who possesses the glory of tiger lion garuda dragon,
Who possesses the confidence beyond words:
I pay homage at the feet of the Rigden king.

Kami/Drala

神





Appendix

ABOUT THE SEALS

THE SEALS OF THE TRUNGPA tulkus embody the religious and political interaction between Tibet, China, Mongolia, and even Nepal. Besides having a different origin, each seal evokes a different image or energy. For example, when Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche—the eleventh Trungpa tulku—executed a calligraphy, he would have all of his seals brought along for his use. Depending on whether the theme of the calligraphy was more "Buddhist" or more "Shambhalian," that is, more religious or more secular, he would use a different seal. Out of his nine known seals, seven are represented in this book.

The oldest seal pictured in this book is the official seal of the Trungpa tulkus, a beautifully carved ivory seal with a wheel-of-dharma handle. It was given by the Chinese emperor to the fifth Trungpa, Tendzin Chögyal, sometime in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Written in Chinese seal script are the characters *ching yu chueh wang*, meaning "pure attendant, enlightened king." Actually, the meaning of the first two characters is uncertain, but they could be a play on the literal meaning of *trungpa*, namely "attendant."

The seal identified in the notes as "a seal of the Trungpa tulkus" was evidently given to a previous Trungpa tulku by one of the Dalai Lamas. It is a wooden teak seal with a round, knobby handle seemingly carved in the shape of a peony (a symbol of royalty). The seal characters are written in Tibetan seal script and read *svasti, gushri, chel-o* [?]. The first word is a Sanskrit word, meaning literally "it is good," and is generally used as a declaration of auspiciousness. The second word is the Tibetan phoneticization of the same Chinese word *kuo shih*, "imperial teacher." The last word is still undeciphered; it might refer to a place name.

The "EVAM seal" is a small, round ivory seal. This is another official





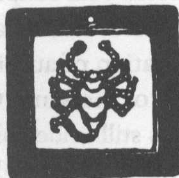


seal for the Trungpa tulkus, and it has the Trungpa tulku logo, an artistic representation of the Sanskrit word *evam*. *Evam* literally means "thus" and appears at the beginning of all Buddhist sutras in the phrase *evam maya shrutam*, which means "thus have I heard." In another context, E represents the passive, feminine, empty aspect of reality, and VAM the active, masculine, luminous aspect. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche had this seal made in Taiwan while he was at Oxford University in England, as the one he used to have in Tibet was lost. In Tibet, he sometimes used it as a name label, and sealed the bottom edge of brocade dancing costumes that were being lent out.

The "Dharmasara seal" is also made of ivory, and was also made while Trungpa Rinpoche was at Oxford. This is a personal seal, as it has Dharmasa(ga)ra, the Sanskrit equivalent of Trungpa Rinpoche's personal name, Chökyi Gyatso, engraved in Tibetan letters. It was made in Thailand, where unfortunately a syllable of the Sanskrit was omitted. This was later corrected in a newer ivory seal.

The two seals called "name seals" in the notes were cut out of stone for Trungpa Rinpoche in the 1970s, possibly in California. (See page 231 for examples.) The red-on-white seal says in Chinese seal script *fa hai*, "Dharma Ocean," whereas the white-on-red one says *shan huan*, "Goodness Joy." Trungpa Rinpoche's full *shramanera* (novice monk) name is





Karma Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso Künga Zangpo, so when he put these two seals next to each other, he was signing his work Chökyi Gyatso Künga Zangpo, "Ocean of Dharma All-Joyful Goodness," or in the Chinese—"Dharma Ocean Goodness Joy."

Also shown in this book are two seals known as the "scorpion seals"—one large, one small. They have the design of a scorpion, a design previously used for the seal of the King of Dege (a kingdom in Eastern Tibet). For Trungpa Rinpoche, they are seals of the Mukpo family or clan. These "scorpion seals" signify the power of command. If one rejects the command, one gets stung. In the border at the top of the seal is a small crescent moon and sun, which represent the unity of masculine and feminine principles.

Adapted from John Rockwell, Jr., "The Labyrinth of Tibetan Seals," *Vajradhatu Sun*, June/July 1985. Used by arrangement with the author. The impressions of the seals shown here were made by Trungpa Rinpoche's eldest son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

Notes

P. 219
No date, Karmê Chöling
Ink on paper, 30 × 20 in. (76 × 51 cm.)
Signed: Chökyi Gyatso
Evam seal
Collection of Karmê Chöling

P. 221
1973, Jackson Hole, Wyoming
Ink on paper, 18 × 12 in. (46 × 30 cm.)
Signed: Chögyam
No seal
Wedding gift
Collection of Mipham and Abbie Halpern

P. 223
No date
Ink on paper, 27 × 34 in. (69 × 86 cm.)
Signed: Chökyi Gyatso
Upper left: official Trungpa seal
Lower right: Dharmasara seal
Private collection

P. 225
No date
Ink on paper, 29 × 23 in. (74 × 58 cm.)
Signed: Chökyi Gyatso
Evam seal
Collection of New York Dharmadhatu

P. 227
No date, Karmê Chöling
Ink on paper, 20 × 30 in. (51 × 76 cm.)
Signed: Dorje Dzinpa Chökyi Gyatso
Evam seal
Collection of Karmê Chöling

P. 229
No date
Ink on shikishi board, 42 × 30 in. (107 × 76 cm.)
Signed: Chökyi Gyatso
Upper: official Trungpa seal
Lower: EVAM seal
Collection of Vajradhatu

P. 231
1977, Charlemont, Massachusetts
Ink on paper, 36 × 24 in. (91 × 61 cm.)
Signed: Chögyam
Upper left: name seals
Lower right: Dharmasara seal
Private collection

P. 233
1979, Boulder, Colorado
Ink on paper, 36 × 24 in. (91 × 61 cm.)
Signed: Chökyi Gyatso
Small scorpion seal
Given to Polly Wellenbach when she was appointed director of Karma Dzong, Boulder
Collection of Polly Wellenbach

P. 235
1979, Boulder, Colorado
Ink on paper, 30 × 22 in. (76 × 56 cm.)
Signed: Properly written at the palace of Dorje Dzong by the Dorje Dradül

Large and small scorpion seals
Birthday present
Collection of Jeremy Hayward

P. 237
No date
Ink on paper, 30 × 22 in. (76 × 56 cm.)
Signed: Chögyam
A seal of the Trungpa tulkus
Collection of Neal and Karen Greenberg

P. 239
1980, Boulder, Colorado
Ink on paper, 29 × 23 in. (74 × 59 cm.)
Signed: Dorje Dradül
Small scorpion seal
Collection of James and Sharon Hoagland

P. 241
1980
Ink on paper, 26 × 20 in. (66 × 20 cm.)
Signed: Dorje Dradül
Small scorpion seal
Collection of David and Dinah Brown

P. 243
No date
Ink on paper, 26 × 20 in. (66 × 51 cm.)
Signed: Dorje Dradül
Dharmasara seals and partial large scorpion seal
Collection of Vajradhatu

P. 245
No date
Ink on paper, 27 × 22 in. (69 × 56 cm.)
Signed: Dorje Dradül
Full and partial scorpion seals
Collection of New York Dharmadhatu

P. 247
1983, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Ink on paper, 36 × 13 in. (91 × 33 cm.)
Signed: Dorje Dradül
Large and small scorpion seals
Collection of the Drescher family



Sources

Page 220: The Heart of the Buddha (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1991), pp. 91, 93, 98, 102; *222:* from *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* (Halifax, N.S.: Nālandā Translation Committee, 1990), p. 7; *228:* "Samsara and Nirvana," in *First Thought Best Thought,* p. 19; *230*: "Oxherding Pictures," in *Mudra,* p. 90; 232: *Shambhala,* p. 63; *236:* "Garuda Is the Mighty Force," in *Warrior Songs* (Halifax, N.S.: Vajradhatu Office of Publications & Archives, 1991); *238: Shambhala,* p. 130; *240: Shambhala,* pp. 129–130; *242:* from "The Vajradhatu Anthem," unpublished poem; *244*: *Journey without Goal,* p. 140.

Selected Chronology

1940	Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche born in Nangchen, East Tibet.
1941	Enthroned as eleventh Trungpa, supreme abbot of Surmang monasteries, and governor of Surmang District.
1945–59	Studied calligraphy, thangka painting, and monastic dance in addition to traditional monastic disciplines.
1958	Received degrees of kyorpön (doctor of divinity) and khenpo (master of studies) as well as full monastic ordination.
1963–67	Spaulding sponsorship to attend Oxford University; studied comparative religion, philosophy, fine arts.
1968	Cofounded Samye Ling Meditation Centre in Dumfriesshire, Scotland.
1970	Arrived in North America.
1971–77	*Garuda, A Periodical Journal.* Editing, design and layout *Garuda 1–5.*
1972	Founded Mudra Theater Group. *Milarepa Film Workshop,* Lookout Mountain, Colorado.
1972–87	Design work: graphics and posters, banners and fabric design, furniture, book design, set and costume design, jewelry, photography.
1973	Founded Vajradhatu, an international association of Buddhist meditation and study centers. *Mudra Theater Conference,* Boulder, Colorado.
1974	Founded Nalanda Foundation, an association of educational and contemplative arts associations.

	Founded the Naropa Institute, the only accredited Buddhist-inspired university in North America.
	Art in Everyday Life, Willits, California.
	Thangka exhibit, the Asian Gallery of the Avery Brundage Collection, de Young Museum.
1975	*Visual Dharma: The Buddhist Art of Tibet.* Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
1976	*Visual Dharma,* Willits, California. Flower arrangements, calligraphy, and poetry readings.
1977–1987	Chairman of the Board, Centre Productions (film company).
1977	Director, *Empowerment,* Centre Productions, a documentary of visit of His Holiness the Gyalwang Karmapa XVI to North America in 1976.
1978	Flower arranging exhibition, Emmanuel Gallery, University of Colorado, Denver.
1978–86	Dharma art seminars: a series of seminars taught at the Naropa Institute and elsewhere throughout North America on creativity and meditation.
1979	Flower arranging exhibition, University of Colorado, Denver.
	Heaven, Earth, and Man, a portfolio of thirteen silk-screened drawings and calligraphies, Gritz Visual Graphics, Boulder, Colorado.
1980	*Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements,* Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art.
	Flower arranging exhibition, Boulder Center for the Visual Arts.
	Four Calligraphies, in conjunction with Kanjuro Shibata Sensei, Los Angeles, edition of thirty.
	Kami, silk-screen calligraphy, Centre Productions, edition of fifty.
1981	Director, *Discovering Elegance,* Vajradhatu, using footage of his installation in Los Angeles, 1980.
	One-man show of calligraphies, Satori Gallery, San Francisco.

	Winter Beauty: An Environmental Installation, Boulder Center for the Visual Arts.
1982	*Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements,* Emmanuel Gallery, University of Colorado, Denver.
	Founded Miksang Photographic Society, Kalapa Ikebana school of flower arranging.
1982–83	Consultant to the curators of *The Silk Route and Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trade Routes of the Trans-Himalayan Region,* Frederick S. Wight Gallery U.C.L.A. and the Smithsonian Institute.
1987	Death in Halifax, Nova Scotia; cremation at Karmê Chöling, Barnet, Vermont.

VISUAL DHARMA

The Buddhist Art of Tibet



Introduction

THIS EXHIBITION OF Tibetan art presents the visual dharma of tantra according to the Buddhist tradition. The practice of Buddhism has begun to develop in this country in the last fifteen years. Scholars and practitioners have been inspired by the teaching and it is gradually becoming a living tradition rather than a mere anthropological study. People have heard of the existence of tantra, but it is still something only vaguely understood that has yet to take root.

The outlandishness of the tantric images suggests something alien, superstitious, perhaps having to do with demon worship. This is not the case. The Buddhist spiritual approach is nontheistic. The figures of the tantric iconography do not stand for external beings; they are not deities in the ordinary sense of but represent aspects of transmuted ego. Ego is the pervasive confusion of appropriating energy in a self-centered way. Transmutation is learned through meditative training, both through sitting meditation practice and in everyday life, through cultivating clear awareness and genuine relationship with the situation of life. It is a process which accommodates the energy of confused mind and arouses its innate clarity and precision.

The awakened mind is characterized by compassion, perfect action, fearlessness, luminous intelligence, etc. These aspects of enlightenment are what is embodied in the tantric iconography. The terrifying qualities of the wrathful figures portray the awakened energy which devastates the confusion and hesitation of ego.

Buddhism has been uprooted from Tibet. Particularly tantric Buddhism was unique to the Tibetan tradition and is in danger of being lost. The tradition is a treasury of insight into human psychology and it seems

worthwhile to attempt to convey a genuine understanding of it, since it is so readily liable to misunderstanding.

This exhibition is part of the general work of transmitting the wisdom of Buddhism in which we are engaged. It gives me pleasure to be able to share this occasion with you.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Office of Exhibitions, its Director, Bruce K. MacDonald, and Susan E. Cohen, Administrative Assistant, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for cooperating with our foundation in making the exhibition possible.

Visual Dharma: The Buddhist Art of Tibet

Background and History

THE ART OF TIBET is entirely based on the spirituality of Buddhism. The pure native Tibetan art of the Bön (Tt.: bon)* tradition was lost with the coming of Buddhism to Tibet from India in the ninth century. The main source of the Tibetan art that has flourished since then is the iconographical art of India with strong influences from China and Persia.

One of the first examples of Buddhist art in Tibet was produced in the time of King Songsten Gampo (Tt.: srong btsan sgam po; reigned 608–649 C.E.), well before Buddhism was generally known in the country. Songsten Gampo married Nepalese and Chinese princesses, both Buddhists. They each brought their family shrines with them to Lhasa, the seat of the monarchy, and the king built temples there to house them. These first landmarks of Buddhist art survive until the present day. It was King Trisong Detsen (Tt.: khri srong lde btsan), the great-grandson of Songtsen Gampo, who invited to Tibet Padmasambhava (better known as Guru Rinpoche, "precious guru") and Shantarakshita, the great spiritual masters who converted the Tibetan people, learned and ordinary, and established Buddhism as the national religion. These two also, with King Trisong Detsen, founded Samye (Tt.: bsam yas) monastery, Tibet's first, which was to become the fundamental monument of Buddhism in that country.

In the process of expanding his kingdom in the direction of Persia,

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*The text and catalog of the exhibition use the following abbreviations: Tt.: Tibetan transliteration; T.: Tibetan pronunciation; S.: Sanskrit.

Trisong Detsen visited and sacked a religious establishment there at a place called Batra. From there he brought back Persian art and ritual objects as well as Persian master craftsmen. Along with the objects came Pehar, the guardian spirit of the temple at Batra. Pehar was tamed and converted by Guru Rinpoche and became then the guardian deity of Samye.

Chinese influence also entered Tibet during this period, especially in the form of Ch'an Buddhism, the Chinese precursor of Zen. Eighty Ch'an masters came to teach in central Tibet and attracted many Tibetan disciples. This strongly implanted the influence of Chinese Buddhist ritual and generally provided inspiration in the newly converted country.

The monasteries which began to be built were modeled on the palaces of Tibetan royalty. Even the interior designs and seating arrangements were copied from the audience halls of Tibetan kings. Iconographical subjects were painted on the walls as frescoes and three-dimensional shrines were built and sculptured images of deities placed upon them.

Thangkas or scroll paintings were, from the first, religious in nature. The first thangkas originated in India and depicted the wheel of life, a sort of diagram showing the world of samsara and how to get out of it. Pilgrims carried them on their backs and unrolled them in village squares along their way for use in illustrating their talks on the basic truths of Buddhism.

Thangkas developed much wider use in Tibet, a country where for a long time a large portion of the population was nomadic. In nomadic Tibet, it was the practice of local rulers to travel about their regions setting up their princely camps in various places and holding court in great, richly appointed tents. The Tibetan religious orders adopted this pattern from them. Groups of monks moved over the country, pitching camp in the highlands in summer and in the lowlands in winter. The abbots, as they rode in the caravans, went like kings, wearing high gold hats of office and surrounded by attendants carrying banners. The monks were great in numbers and carried with them everything necessary for a full-scale religious establishment. According to the *Book of the Crystal Rosary*, when the seventh Karmapa, Chötrag Gyamtso (Tt.: chos grags rgyam-tso, 1454–1506) traveled, it required five hundred mules to carry the Kanjur (Tt.: bka' 'gyur; S.: Tripitaka) and other religious books. He was accompanied by ten thousand monks with fifteen hundred tents. Porta-

ble shrines were brought and full ritual paraphernalia, so that what amounted to complete monasteries could be set up in the tents. Thangkas, being portable, were used instead of frescoes. This nomadic monasticism was a fundamental part of Tibetan spiritual life; one of the Tibetan words for monastery, *gar,* in use to this day, means "camp."

As the traveling monasteries were offered land and forts by local kings and landowners, they hung their thangkas in the shrine rooms of the permanent buildings. Ceilings and columns were painted with decorative work. Manuscripts were illuminated. Large mandalas were painted to place under the shrines. There were also small card paintings to be used in rituals.

The word *thangka* comes from the Tibetan *thang yig,* which means "annal" or "written record." The ending *yig,* which means "letter" and carries the sense of "written," is replaced by the ordinary substantive ending *ka.* Thus the word *thangka* has the sense of a record.

There are three predominant schools of Tibetan thangka painting. The Kadam (Tt.: bka' gdams), the early classical school, shows simplicity, spaciousness, and basic richness. Menri (Tt.: sman ris), the later classical school, originated in the fifteenth century with an artist known as Menla Töndrup (Tt.: sman bla don grub) from a family of great physicians. Its style maintains the simplicity and spaciousness with a greater emphasis on richness of detail, there being more Persian influence. New Menri (T.: Mensa; Tt.: sman gsar), a later development of the Menri school in the late seventeenth century, is quite, one might say, baroque and overwhelmingly colorful, perhaps intimidatingly rich. There is a great emphasis on curves at the expense of straight lines and very little open space. The third main school, the Karma Gardri (Tt.: karma sgar bris) school was developed in the sixteenth century, mainly by the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (Tt.: mi bskyod rdo rje, 1507–1554). This style was further elaborated by the renowned master Chökyi Jungne (Tt.: chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1700–1774), the eighth Tai Situ (Tt.: Ta'i Situ) and founder of Palpung (Tt.: dpal' spung) in the area of rupas (sculptured images). The Karma Gardri style is clear and precise, spacious and, in places, rich. It shows marked Chinese influence, evidenced by the use of pastel colors and prominent stylized features of landscape.

The art of thangka painting was a family trade, passed on from father to son in a long apprenticeship. When a thangka, a fresco, or the embellishment of a monastery was commissioned, the master was accompa-

nied in the work by a group of students, including his sons. The master and his apprentices were welcomed with a feast and there was a weekly feast for them for as long as it took to complete the work. They were presented with gifts at various times, usually at the time of the feasts. They were paid in commodities, such as cattle, quantities of butter, cheese, grain, jewelry, or clothes.

The traditional support for a thangka is white linen. Silk was used on rare occasions. This cloth, the re shi (Tt.: ras gzhi, "cloth background"), is stretched on a wooden frame. It is then prepared with a base of chalk mixed with gum arabic. The first step is a freehand charcoal sketch by the master. The charcoal is made by baking wood of tamarisk in a metal tube. The master then goes over the sketch in black ink and marks the various areas according to the colors that are to be put in by the apprentices.

Traditionally, blue is made from ground lapis lazuli, red is vermilion from cinnabar; yellow is made from sulfur, green is from tailor's green-stone. Pink is made from flower petals and, more recently, also from cosmetics imported from China or India.

To make a brush, the tip of a stick, usually tamarisk or bamboo, is dipped in glue. The artist carefully places the hairs, one by one. Best is the hair of the sable or of a small Himalayan wildcat called sa (Tt.: gsa'). Ideally, the hair should be pulled from the tail of a live animal, since thus it remains more resilient. The hairs having been placed on the stick, they are bound by a silk thread, also dipped in glue.

When the basic colors are filled in by the apprentices, the master goes over the work, shading with lighter colors derived from flowers and vegetables. Finally he retouches with gold. An apprentice burnishes the gold with a roundpointed instrument made from an agate.

Traditionally, the eyes of the deities were left for last so they could be painted in at a special celebration called "opening the eyes."

When the painting is completed it is mounted on cloth. Originally there were two borders, one of red brocade, one of blue. Later yellow brocade also became acceptable and the modern style has three brocade borders, yellow, red, and blue. In the center of the borders below the painting is placed a square of particularly elaborate brocade, which is known as the "door." In some sense the brocade borders represent an edifice which houses the world of the painting. The "door" provides an entrance into that world.

The thangkas are covered for protection with red and yellow silk veils, red and yellow being the colors used for the clothing of the sangha (community of the dharma). Two red ribbons hang over the veils. These are known as lung nön (Tt.: rlung gnon), "wind holders." These ribbons hark back to the time when thangkas were hung in tents and wind required them to be tied against the wall. The rolling sticks at the bottom of the brocade are finished with gold or silver knobs.

Occasionally thangkas were done in silk appliqué or embroidered on silk.

Sculptured images in the traditional manner are first modeled in sealing wax (T.: be; Tt.: 'bes). Clay is molded onto a wax image and the wax melted away. The metal cast in the clay molds is usually pure copper. Very old images are found to have been cast in bell metal, a mixture of copper, silver, and pewterlike alloys. Once cast, the images are gilded. Then they are often highlighted with painted colors. Ornaments are sometimes inlaid with jewels and, quite frequently, the hair, lips, and eyes are touched with color. There is a special "opening of the eyes" ceremony, just as with thangkas, when the eyes are painted in. The images are hollow and after the "eye-opening" they are consecrated in a ceremony which involves filling them with relics and mantras. Before the bottom is sealed, as the very last thing, grains of precious stones are put into the image to add a sense of basic richness. It is on account of this practice that images have frequently been broken into by those hoping to find valuable gems.

As a social phenomenon, making images was much the same as thangka painting. The art and lore were passed down in families and through apprenticeship. A sculptor and his apprentices having come to a monastery to provide it with a new treasure, were feted, given gifts, and paid just as were the thangka painters.

It is widely thought that thangka painting is a form of meditation. This is not true. Though all the thangkas have religious subjects, most of the artists were and are laypeople. As has been said, the art is passed down in families. It is true that a master thangka painter has a knowledge of iconographical detail that might easily awe a novice monk. Naturally, also, artists have a sense of reverence for the sacredness of their work. Nevertheless, the painting of thangkas is primarily a craft rather than a religious exercise. One exception is the nyin thang ("one-day thangka") practice in which, as part of a particular sadhana, while repeating the

appropriate mantra, uninterruptedly, without sleeping, a monk paints a thangka in one twenty-four hour period.

Thangkas were painted on commission for noteworthy social occasions: for the welfare of a newly born infant, for the liberation of one just dead, at the commencement of some new project. Often artistically inclined gurus or abbots painted thangkas to glorify their lineages or convey the richness or inspiration of their tradition.

Thangkas are used as objects of adoration, but mainly as a means to refine a meditative visualization. They are displayed over shrines which are bedecked with butter lamps, incense and offerings, and ritual objects of many kinds. Thangkas of the lives of saints are displayed for the celebrations of holidays associated with them. Special thangkas painted by great teachers of particular lineages are also hung for yearly ceremonies. Practitioners hang the thangkas of their yidams or gurus over the shrines in their rooms as constant reminders of their presence. Formal rooms were hung with thangkas in Tibet to receive important guests such as kings, government officials, or eminent spiritual teachers. Sometimes thangkas hung in the audience halls of local rulers.

Thangkas were never bought or sold, but changed hands only as gifts.

Elements of Iconography

Thangkas and other forms of Tibetan art express the vision of tantric Buddhism. The subjects they depict are definite elements in that view of the world.

Thangkas and sculptured images fall into six general categories according to their subject matter: (1) enlightened beings, (2) yidams, (3) dharmapalas, (4) mandalas and stupas, (5) illustrations of the teaching, (6) yantras.

The iconography of tantric Buddhism, as all other aspects of it, is inspired by the teaching of the five buddha principles: vajra, ratna, padma, karma, buddha. These are the five basic energies present everywhere. They are often known as the buddha families. Each is particularly associated with a certain ordinary emotion which can be transmuted into a certain definite wisdom or aspect of the awakened state of mind. The buddha families are also associated with colors, elements, directions, seasons, landscapes—with any aspect of the phenomenal world.

As has been said, thangkas are mainly for the purpose of refining visualization, which is a tantric or vajrayana meditation technique. The vajrayana is the third and most advanced level of Buddhist spiritual training. To arrive at this stage, students are expected first to undergo intellectual and meditative training on the hinayana and mahayana levels. In hinayana they must understand the basic truths of egolessness, impermanence, and suffering as well as practice shamatha and vipashyana meditation. In mahayana, a competent master must show them a different way of seeing reality, from the perspective of shunyata, or emptiness.

At this point, tantric practice begins with the four foundation practices: one hundred thousand prostrations, one hundred thousand repetitions of the refuge formula, one hundred thousand repetitions of the one-hundred-syllable Vajrasattva mantra, one hundred thousand presentations of mandala offerings. Some schools also add one hundred thousand repetitions of the bodhisattva vow. All of these tantric practices are accompanied by a visualization.

Visualization is not a magical practice nor worship of an external deity. It is a process of identification with a particular principle of inspiration and energy, with conviction in its presence. The visualization is preceded and terminated by the shunyata experience, which dissolves the ego's tendency to hang on to something solid. It has been said that visualizing without shunyata is dangerous; it accumulates fixed ground for ego and leads to the achievement of egohood.

There is a progress of sophistication in the practice of visualization as the practitioner develops through the tantric levels of teaching. It begins with regarding what is visualized as an object of devotion; the process then becomes the acknowledgment of a transcendental presence; finally visualization means unifying with the wisdom body of a deity.

Enlightened Beings

Thangkas of buddhas, gurus, and bodhisattvas all fall into this category. Such figures are visualized in order to identify with the lineage of spiritual transmission from teacher to disciple, to surrender and to take refuge.

Taking refuge is a process of freeing oneself from the notion of an external refuge. It is often said in the Buddhist scriptures that one should

not take refuge in an external god or in external protectors, material or psychological, such as parents, relatives, or wealth. Instead one should take refuge in the guru-buddha, the embodiment of the dharma, which is the nature of reality itself. Surrendering means becoming an empty vessel, becoming emotionally ready to receive the teaching.

Buddhas. There are three types of buddhas: nirmanakaya buddhas, sambhogakaya buddhas, dharmakaya buddhas. The main nirmanakaya buddhas are the "buddhas of the three times," that is, the buddha of the past age, Dipankara; the buddha of the present age, Shakyamuni; and the buddha of the future age, Maitreya. The nirmanakaya buddhas are those having human bodies and generally sharing the human condition. They wear the three robes of a monk, signifying the complete attainment of discipline, meditation, and wisdom. Their hair is surmounted by an unadorned topknot.

Sambhogakaya buddhas are the yidams (*see below*). There are two dharmakaya buddhas to be found in the iconography. Samantabhadra (T.: Kuntu Zangpo; Tt.: kun tu bzang po), not to be confused with the bodhisattva of the same name, is the dharmakaya buddha according to the Old Translation school. He is depicted naked, symbolizing the formlessness and simplicity of the dharmakaya. He wears the topknot, is dark in color, and holds his hands in the meditation mudra. Vajradhara (T.: Dorje Chang; Tt.: rdorje chang) is the dharmakaya buddha according to the New Translation school. He appears wearing sambhogakaya garments and ornaments, the same as those of the peaceful yidams. Samantabhadra and Vajradhara are the primordial buddhas, who represent the totally unconditioned quality of enlightened mind. According to the New Translation school, Shakyamuni took the form of Vajradhara to teach the tantras.

Bodhisattvas. The bodhisattvas depicted in the iconography are the bodhisattva mahasattvas, the "great bodhisattvas." They are disciples of the Buddha Shakyamuni on the sambhogakaya level, ideal figures who are the complete expression of bodhisattvahood. Each according to his nature works ceaselessly to bring enlightenment to all sentient beings. They also act as spokesmen for sentient beings to the nirmanakaya buddhas. Often, it is said, sentient beings are too confused even to seek the teachings; therefore the bodhisattvas approach the buddhas, asking that

they turn the wheel of dharma. They also wear the garments and ornaments of the peaceful yidams, but in the manner of princes rather than kings. Examples are Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, and Tara.

Gurus. The guru thangkas show the accomplishments, powers, and attributes of the great teachers. For example, Guru Rinpoche appears wearing several different layers of clothing. He wears the white underrobe of vajrayana; over that he wears the three robes of a hinayana monk. Outside these he wears a blue kimono-type gown (T.: per; Tt.: ber), a vermilion cloak, and lotus hat. The gown, cloak, and hat are the costume of a king representing the universal monarch of mahayana. These garments signify that he has accomplished all three yanas and can manifest to his students on whichever of these levels is appropriate.

Other gurus are depicted wearing the robes appropriate to their lifestyle of yogi, monk, or pandit. They hold in their hands the appropriate attributes: a gold wheel for power, sword and book for pandit, begging bowl for monk, skullcup for yogi, etc. The richness of the lineage and the teaching is symbolized by highly ornamented robes and richness of detail.

Yidams

Yidams (S.: ishta devata) means personal deity. Yidams are sambhogakaya buddhas, particular forms of which are visualized in accordance with the individual psychological makeup of the practitioner. A practitioner's yidam represents his particular characteristic expression of buddha nature. Identifying with his yidam, therefore, means identifying with his own basic nature, free from its distorted aspects. Through seeing his basic nature in this impersonal and universalized way, all aspects of it are transmuted into the wisdom of the spiritual path. This leads directly to the service of all sentient beings, because in this way the practitioner becomes fearless. His hesitation gone, his action automatically becomes skillful and lucid; he is able to subdue what needs to be subdued and care for whatever needs his care.

The student first develops intense devotion toward his guru. This relationship with the guru makes it possible for the student to experience an intuitive kinship with the guru's lineage and then with his own yidam.

Yidams belong to particular buddha families. For example, Chakra-

samvara belongs to the padma family, Vajrabhairava to the ratna, the Vajrakilaya form of Vajrakumara to the karma family. Yidams are not to be equated with the patron saints or guardian angels found in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. They are not regarded as protectors from danger or saviors. They are simply acknowledgments of the student's basic energy. The student visualizes the outstanding characteristics of the yidam until he achieves complete union with him.

There are different kinds of yidams. There are wrathful yidams, peaceful yidams, and some semiwrathful yidams. The three mentioned above are examples of wrathful yidams. Wrathful yidams are always associated with what is known in tantric terms as "vajra anger." Vajra anger is without hatred, a dynamic energy which, no matter which of the five wisdoms it belongs to, is invincible. It is completely indestructible, imperturbable, because it was not created but discovered as an original quality. Wrathful and warlike, it devastates the tendency toward idiot compassion and cuts through the hesitations that come from disbelieving in one's buddha nature. Doubt is destroyed and confusion is chopped into pieces. Thus the wrathful yidams are portrayed treading on the corpse of ego, wearing ornaments of human bones and skulls, drinking blood, holding lethal weapons of all kinds.

In general the wrathful figures wear the five-skull crown, the garland of fifty-two heads, the six bone ornaments, the six jewel ornaments, the five ornaments of the naga castes. The five-skull crown exhibits the five kleshas (emotional hindrances) as ornaments of the dharma. These are anger, pride, passion, jealousy, stupidity. The garland of fifty-two heads symbolizes triumph over the fifty-two kinds of neurotic concepts. The six bone ornaments are necklace, garland, armlets, bracelets, anklets, crossed bands across the torso. The jewel ornaments double the bone ones. The nagas, snakelike water spirits, represent passion. The naga ornaments represent the five levels of the Hindu caste system in the naga world, thus the five levels of passion. The ornaments are a ribbon in the hair, armlets, bracelets, body garlands, anklets. They signify that the passions have been transmuted into attributes of dharmic action. Many of the wrathful yidams also wear the tigerskin (male) or leopardskin (female) skirt representing fearlessness, the elephantskin shawl representing strength, the humanskin shawl representing compassion.

The peaceful yidams inspire the student's nonaggression and gentleness. Rather than destroying the dullness and hesitation of ego, identifi-

cation with the peaceful yidams awakens it into openness. The peaceful yidams wear the raiment of archaic Aryan kings. They wear crowns and hold scepters and attributes such as the vajra, a golden wheel, wish-fulfilling gems, a bowl of amrita (the elixir of immortality), etc.

Peaceful yidams wear a five-medallioned tiara with gems in the colors of the five buddha families. They wear a triple topknot adorned with ornaments of gold, diamonds, lapis lazuli, and ribbons. They wear three necklaces, earrings, armlets, bracelets, and anklets, all of gold and lapis lazuli. They wear rainbow-colored, pantlike lower garments under a short brocade skirt. The upper body is naked except for a short-sleeved blouse coming just below the nipples and, over it, a short, draped mantle. A long scarf floats from the neck.

The semiwrathful (T.: shimatro; Tt.: shi ma khro) yidams are described as a union of passion and anger. They both attract and reject. In visualizing them, the practitioner feels his basic being enriched by a sense of resourcefulness and flexibility in that magnetization or destruction could both be expressions of the awakened state of mind.

Yidams have both male and female forms. The male wrathful yidam is known as *heruka* which means "blood drinker," he who drinks the blood of ego. The female wrathful yidam is called a dakini. The dakinis are tricky and playful. The male and female of the peaceful yidams are known as *bhagavat* and *bhagavati* meaning "glorious one."

The male figures signify awakened energy, skillful means, bliss. The female aspect is compassion, emptiness, and intellect (which, as the emptying of confusion, is passive rather than active). The emptiness signifies fundamental accommodation and also ultimate fertility in the sense that emptiness is the mother of form. Through union with the heruka, the dakini can give birth to enlightenment. The dakinis in general reinforce the nature of their consorts and the bhagavati has the role of asking the bhagavat on behalf of all sentient beings to proclaim the teachings.

In general the union of the male and female aspects, known as the yab-yum ("father-mother") form, is a symbol that skillful action is impossible without compassion, that energy cannot be effective without intellect, and that bliss is impossible without emptiness. This symbolism denotes the interaction of these elements as aspects of enlightenment, rather than on the ordinary confused level of indulgence in passion and aggression.

Dharmapalas

Dharmapala means "guardian of the teaching." The function of the dharmapala is to protect the practitioner from deceptions and sidetracks. If the practitioner ventures onto dangerous ground, unhealthy for his progress on the path, the dharmapala principle pulls him back violently. As the practitioner becomes more closely identified with the teaching, the energy of the dharmapalas begins to fall under his control. A student cannot, however, come in contact with his dharmapala principle until his guru has brought him into relationship with his yidam.

The two main types of dharmapalas are mahakalas (male) and mahakalis (female), on the one hand, and lokapalas on the other. All dharmapalas, with the exception of most lokapalas, are wrathful. The mahakalas wear the ornaments and bear the attributes of herukas. *Maha* means "great"; *kala, kali* means "black." Thus they are usually black or dark in color. The main role of the mahakalas is to fulfill the four karmas or enlightened actions. These are pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying. Pacifying means causing psychological imbalance or physical sickness to subside. Enriching means imbuing experience with a sense of richness; also giving physical wealth and long life. Magnetizing means attracting power and powerful relationships which give control over situations. Destroying means annihilating confusion and obstacles.

The mahakalis also wear the bone and jewel ornaments. They usually ride a horse or mule, from whose saddle hangs a goatskin bag of poison which kills the enemies of the teaching. They also carry a mirror of judgment, a snake lasso, and a bow and arrows. They are fierce and swift in destroying whatever obstructs the dharma. They are also tricksters who deliberately lead one into trouble if one's attention lapses. They create hallucinations which can deceive even Yama, the lord of death. They are mistresses of the realm of passion and can seduce one into samsaric involvements. They can save one from confusion or drag one into the pain of the dark age—disorder, famine, plague. For the accomplished yogi, they act as maidservants, carrying messages and doing services.

The lokapalas are protectors of the teaching and also of the nation. They are, for the most part, deities from the pre-Buddhist Bön tradition of Tibet that have been transformed by the Buddhist outlook. Notable exceptions to this are the guardians for the four directions, preserved from Indian iconography. Dhritarashtra (T.: Yukhorkhyong; Tt.: yul

'khor skyong) is the guardian of the east; he is usually white and plays a lute. Virudhaka (T.: Phakyepo; Tt.: 'phags skyes po), the guardian of the south, is usually blue and carries a sword. Virupaksha (T.: Chenmizang; Tt.: spyan mi bzang), the guardian of the west, is red and holds a small stupa. Vaishravana (T.: Namtose; Tt.: rnams thos sres) is the guardian of the north; he is yellow and carries a banner.

The adoption of existing national deities by Buddhism is not unique to Tibet but also took place in China and Japan, where Taoist and Shinto deities were incorporated into the buddhadharma. The lokapalas are usually depicted riding a horse, wearing a suit of armor, and bearing suitable attributes such as various weapons, pennons and banners, wish-fulfilling gems in a gold dish, lassos, etc. They are regarded by Buddhism as aspects of the national ego transmuted into destroyers of frivolous activities, unacceptable to the teaching.

Mandalas and Stupas

The basic form of a mandala is a palace with a center and four gates in the four directions. It should be understood that mandala representations are not used as objects of contemplation in an attempt to bring about certain states of mind. Mandalas are used by practitioners who have been introduced into the practice of particular sadhanas as a sort of shrine on which to place ritual objects. The ritual objects such as vajra, bell (S.: ghanta), skullcup, etc., are placed on certain parts of the mandala in order to magnetize to it the particular deity whose attributes the objects are.

There are four traditional ways of representing mandalas: with colored sand; with five heaps of grain for the center and the four directions; by painting; by casting a three-dimensional mandala in metal.

The four directions are called east, south, west, and north, but in practice they have a more personal sense. The practitioner identifies himself with the deity whose dwelling place is at the center of the mandala and the directions become his front, his right, his back, his left, with east being the front. Two-dimensional representations of mandalas are aerial views. One sees four gates in the four primary directions and messengers and subprinciples of various kinds emanating out from the central figure, usually in the eight directions. (The eight directions actually stand for ten directions, by including up and down.) The mandala is, in

the case of wrathful yidams, surrounded by a charnel ground, the place of birth and death, recognizable often by depictions of corpses, innards, and severed limbs. The charnel ground is the basic earth on which the mandala is built. It represents the world as a rubbish pile of existence which has been consecrated. It also represents the all-pervasiveness of impermanence. Outside that is a further circle of flames in five colors signifying the five wisdoms. This demarcates and keeps safe the area of the mandala.

Stupas (T.: choten, Tt.: mchod rten) are three-dimensional forms representing the body, speech, and mind of Buddha. They vary in size from altarpieces to huge monumental structures that can be seen for miles. Probably the oldest form of Buddhist art, they are repositories of sacred relics and texts and objects of simple, straightforward veneration for the teachings of Buddha. Those of any size are venerated by circumambulation, which sometimes may go on for days.

There are many variations in the design of stupas. The basic features common to most are, from the bottom: a square base; a domelike form; thirteen tapering, round steps; a lotus form; a sun held by the crescent moon. These features can be seen as representing the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, space—as well as various aspects of the Buddhist path.

Illustrations of the Teaching

The main example of this category is the wheel of life (S.: bhavachakra; T.: sipa khorlo; Tt.: srid pa 'khor lo). The wheel of life is unique in that it portrays the totality of the Buddhist teaching concerning samsara. This is particularly essential in that understanding the psychological nature of samsara is the working basis of the path, the first step toward enlightenment. Other forms in this category are sets of symbols of various kinds. The heap of five sense organs stands for the five sense-consciousnesses arranged as an offering. The "eight auspicious symbols" are emblematic of the basic nature of the Buddhist teaching. The ornament of the "triple gem" stands for the buddha, the dharma, and the sangha (community of the teaching). There are many traditional ornaments considered as symbols of the auspicious and beneficial nature of some aspect of the buddhadharma.

Yantras

A yantra is a design incorporating elements of iconography which is used as a charm or an amulet. Yantras are placed in houses, vehicles, on animals, carried personally. They are often accompanied by a container of consecrated ingredients such as sesame seeds, gems, minerals, herbs. Written mantras are usually included. Yantras are prepared and consecrated in special ceremonies conducted by lamas.

FIVE BUDDHA FAMILIES

Some impression concerning the nature of the five buddha-family principles is essential to an understanding of tantric Buddhist art. Direct relationships with those five energies is the basis of tantric Buddhist practice.

The five buddha principles constitute the basic mandala with vajra in the east, ratna in the south, padma in the west, karma in the north, and buddha in the center.

Vajra is associated with anger, which is transmuted into mirrorlike wisdom. In the cloudiness, possessiveness, and aggression of anger, there are qualities of brilliance, lucidity, great energy. Seeing these qualities clearly in the vajra yidam, the essence of anger is spontaneously transmuted into openness and precision. Transmutation is not performed deliberately but automatically follows upon clear insight.

Vajra is associated with the element of water. Cloudy, turbulent water symbolizes the defensive and aggressive nature of anger. Clear water suggests the sharp, precise, clear reflectiveness of mirrorlike wisdom. The color white, also associated with vajra, expresses both the all-pervading ice storm of anger and the brilliant reflectiveness of mirrorlike wisdom. Vajra's direction is the east, which is connected with the dispassionate clarity of dawn. The symbol of the vajra family is the vajra (T.: dorje; Tt.: rdo rje), the thunderbolt scepter which betokens indestructibility and precision.

The energy of ratna, when expressed neurotically, is pride or arrogance, which can be transmuted into the wisdom of equanimity. Ratna is connected with the element earth and is alive to the quality of solidity or substantiality. Taking this from the neurotic angle of samsara or ego, there is the constant anxiety of not being substantial enough; so one tries to build a tower of pride that will obviate all challenge. In the enlight-

ened energy of the ratna yidam, one comes in contact with the quality of inexhaustible richness. Seeing this, pride is spontaneously transmuted into the wisdom of equanimity. The wisdom of equanimity, imbued with generosity, sees all situations equally as ornaments of basic being.

Ratna is associated with the warmth, full sunshine, and lushness of the south. Its color yellow can express either the putrescence of pride or the richness and well-being of gold. The ratna family symbol is the jewel which fulfills all wishes.

The energy of the padma family is associated with the element of fire. Distorted by ego, it expresses itself as passion. Passion can be transmuted into discriminating wisdom. A neurotic sense of insufficiency creates the ambition to possess particular aspects of the phenomenal world, to consume like flame their quality of otherness. Through experiencing a sense of total compassion in the padma yidam, passion is transmuted into an energy of enlightened relationship, which sees with warmth and clarity precisely what exists to be related to.

Padma is connected with the west and with the brilliant display of the colorful qualities of existence expressed in the sunset. Its color red evinces the seduction and heat of passion or the all-pervading warmth of compassion. The symbol of the padma family is the lotus of compassion, the purified form of passion.

Karma family energy manifests neurotically as jealousy and on the awakened level as all-accomplishing wisdom. It is the energy of the element of wind which is present everywhere, touching all corners of space. Therefore, in the neurotic manifestation, it is aware of all facets of situations as something it has to keep up with or that it is left out of. If, through relating with the karma yidam, ego's reference point is overwhelmed, the same energy becomes active in every area of situations, doing whatever needs to be done and destroying all obstacles to the fulfillment of enlightenment.

Karma is connected with the cold, stormy, energetic quality of the north. Its color is green, expressing either envy or the energy of all-pervading action. The karma family symbol is either a sword or a double vajra, both of which denote the fulfillment of all actions.

The buddha energy is that which creates stupidity through the ability to play deaf, dumb, and blind to anything that threatens the low-level stability created by ego. This same uncanny ability to be aware of everything in order to turn away from it can be stripped of the turning-away

or ignoring function. Through the insight that comes from relating to the totally awakened form of the buddha yidam, ego's game is exposed and stupidity transmutes into the wisdom of fundamental all-pervading awareness.

The buddha family's color is the blue of its element space, which can either be just dull and blank or alive with the ubiquity of intelligence. A wheel is the symbol of the buddha family, indicating all-pervading rule.



Selected Poems



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Chögyam Trungpa

The Spontaneous Song of Entering into the Blessings and Profound Samaya of the Only Father Guru

Shri Heruka, the unchanging vajra mind,
The primordial buddha, all-pervading, the protector of all,
Padma Tri-me, you are the lord, the embodiment of all the victorious ones.
You are always reflected in the clear mirror of my mind.

In the space of innate ground mahamudra,
The dance of the self-luminous vajra queen takes place,
And passion and aggression, the movements of the mind, become the wheel of wisdom;
What joy it is to see the great ultimate mandala!

The confidence of the unflinching youthful warrior flourishes,
Cutting the aortas of the degraded three lords of materialism
And dancing the sword dance of penetrating insight;
This is the blessing of my only father guru.

Inviting the rays of the waxing moon, Vajra Avalokiteshvara,
The tide of the ocean of compassion swells,

Your only son, Chökyi Gyatso, blossoms as a white lotus;
This is due to the limitless buddha activity of my guru.

In the vast space of mahashunyata, devoid of all expression,
The wings of simplicity and luminosity spread
As the snake-knot of conceptual mind uncoils in space;
Only father guru, I can never repay your kindness.

Alone, following the example of the youthful son of the victorious ones,
Riding the chariot of the limitless six paramitas,
Inviting infinite sentient beings as passengers,
Raising the banner of the magnificent bodhisattvas,
I continue as your heir, my only father guru.

Like a mountain, without the complexities of movement,
I meditate in the nature of the seven vajras,
Subjugating Rudra with the hundred rays of deva, mantra, and mudra,
Beating the victory drum of the great secret vajrayana,
I fulfill the wishes of my only father, the authentic guru.

In the sky of dharmadhatu, which exhausts the conventions of the nine yanas,
Gathering rainclouds thick with the blessings of the ultimate lineage,
Roaring the thunder of relentless crazy wisdom,
Bringing down the rain that cools the hot anguish of the dark age,
As I transform existence into a heavenly wheel of dharma,
Please, my only father, authentic guru, come as my guest.

A Son of Buddha

A son of Buddha, living my life alone,
Riding the chariot of the six paramitas,
Inviting infinite numbers of sentient beings as my
passengers,
I fly the great bodhisattvas' banner and continue the
line of Padma Tri-me.

Like the mountain, transcending the complications of
movement,
I meditate in the seven types of vajra nature
To subjugate the rudra with the hundred rays of
mandala, mantras, and mudra.
Beating the victory drum of the vajrayana,
I fulfill the wishes of my only father guru.

In the space of dharma where the sophistries of the
nine yanas are exhausted,
Gathering the rainclouds of the blessings of the lineage,
I am the thunder of unflinching crazy wisdom
Inviting the downpour to assuage the drought of the
dark age.

Alternate translation of the last three stanzas of the previous poem, written originally in Tibetan.

The world is transmuted into the dharma-mandala.
I invite you, Padma, Tri-me, to be my guest and
witness.

May 19, 1972

Stray Dog

Chögyam is merely a stray dog.
He wanders around the world,
Ocean or snow-peak mountain pass.
Chögyam will tread along as a stray dog
Without even thinking of his next meal.
He will seek friendship with birds and jackals
And any wild animals.

Garuda Is the Mighty Force

Garuda is the mighty force of creation and destruction.
He acts unerringly and will not hesitate.
The children of Shambhala will follow the pattern of
his swooping and wheeling
And the two opposing forces will come to balance one
another in perfect harmony.
This is the future of mankind.

November 14, 1967
Samye Ling, Scotland

The Song of the Wanderer

The mood of sadness is inexhaustible;
Trying to end it would be
Like trying to reach the limits of space.
The feeling of longing is sharp and quick
Like an arrow shot by a skillful archer.

Across the sea in an Asian island
There are wildflowers of every kind.
These flowers are inseparable from the yogi's
 experience.
This is too realistic to be only a dream,
But if it is really happening
I must say it is rather amusing.

In the land of Bhutan
Where the mountains are clothed in mist
Young Chögyam is wandering like a stray dog.
In the hermitage of the Blue Rock Castle
A pregnant tigress is suckling her young.
There we found the nectar of the new age.

1968
Bhutan

May the Great Revolutionary Banner

May the great revolutionary banner
Blow in the wind of peace.
May it blow in the wind of karma.
May it blow in the wind of fearlessness.
One's own mind is revolutionized:
There is no need to conquer others.
Like the warriors of ancient times
Going to war by imperial command,
Like seasoned masters of the martial arts,
We will destroy the fortress of erroneous thinking.
We will no longer tolerate the confused way of life
Controlled by the impersonal forces of materialism,
Since these forces may snatch away
The freedom of human dignity.
One must first give up the ego
And enter the war with one's mind.
That is the first step to freedom.
But we will never be free
By following the voice of desire.
Liberation is only gained
By treading the path of what *is*.

September 1968
Bhutan

The Wind of Karma

Who killed my only father?
Who killed my only mother?
Who caused the rain of blood?
Who gathered the black clouds and the thunderbolts?
Who caused the earthquake that shook the whole
world?
I asked these questions in the middle of a crowd
But no one was able to answer.
So I asked a second time and a third,
Shouting at the top of my voice.
My mind was blank and I didn't know what to think.

Suddenly the great red wind of karma arose;
The king of death appeared on the face of the earth
And raised a fearful hailstorm.
The flag of no-retreat, emblazoned with the knot of
eternity,
Unfurls before the storm. Even the wind of karma
Takes delight in blowing it. The truth of the pattern
emerges
And unshakable confidence is aroused.
Now I am certain; I am fearless; there is no retreat.
The voice of truth is heard throughout the world.

September 1968
Bhutan

Poem

In the copper mountain cave of Taktsang
The mandala created by the guru
Padma's blessing entered my heart.
I am the happy young man from Tibet!
I see the dawn of mahamudra
And awaken into true devotion:
The guru's smiling face is ever-present.
On the pregnant dakini-tigress
Takes place the crazy-wisdom dance
Of Karma Pakshi Padmakara
Uttering the sacred sound of HUM.
His flow of thunder-energy is impressive
His dorje and phurba are the weapons of self-liberation—
With penetrating accuracy they pierce
Through the heart of spiritual pride.
One's faults are so skillfully exposed
That no mask can hide the ego
And one can no longer conceal
The anti-dharma which pretends to be dharma.
Through all my lives may I continue
To be the messenger of dharma
And listen to the song of the king of yanas.
May I lead the life of a bodhisattva.

1968

Colophon from The Sadhana of Mahamudra

Listen, Listen

Listen, listen to the sound of the mind's own utterance,
Within the womb of the beauty of Autumn,
While the setting sun shows the red glory of her smile.
Hearing the bamboo flute which no one plays,
Listen to the reeds swaying in the breeze,
And the silent ripple's song.

The disciples debate,
But never reach the ripple's end.
The teacher's word that lies beyond the mind—
Listened to, it cannot be found,
And found, it still cannot be heard.

Three-Bladed Missile

Three-bladed missile
Piercing to the sky—
Vroom,
Bang, Bang!
It leaves the ground.
It is the manifestation
Of hatred for the whole earth,
Hatred for the whole solar system.
Who is the victim?
Who is the victor?
It is highly ironical
While others live
On such luxury.
There must be some force
Of truth and justice—
These very words have been overused.
Yet with the force of the true powerful nature
There will be the perfect situation
Which is unorganized,
Inspired by the pupil who is not conditioned.
So the world is not all that
Pitch black—
There is some harmony
And in this harmony we live.
We have been inspired

Yet are neither anarchists, nor revolutionists,
In the blind sense.
Love to you all.

December 17, 1969
Scotland

Whistling Grasses of the Esk Valley

Whistling grasses of the Esk Valley,
So many incidents occur.
The image is the climate of this part of the country.
There comes a hailstorm—
Children, children, seek protection!
A mighty thunderbolt strikes to the ground.
It does not make any distinction between trustees and
the spiritual leader.
Violent winds shake the Scots pine tree,
Copper beech and rhododendrons.
I said to myself,
You, most mighty of all, should have come three
weeks earlier.
Here is the big storm.
Buckets of rain pour down.
The Esk river turns reddish in color,
Sweeps all the trees and branches away.
A mighty force invades our valley—
Fishes thrown up on the banks for the birds' delight.

Chögyam watches all this,
Wishing that I could be one of those fishes,
That this ruthless political current would throw me
away.
Why wasn't I born an innocent fish

That could die in peace on the banks of the Esk?
If karma exists the weather will adjust.
I am not seeking revenge.
I am seeking peace
As one of those fish peacefully dead on the bank,
Its body a feast of its victory.
But I cannot help thinking they will say grace before
the meal,
And will have a good cook
To make their evening feast enjoyable.

October 31, 1969
Scotland

This Marriage

This marriage is the marriage of sun and moon.
It is the marriage of ocean and sky.
What can I say if the universal force demonstrates it?
Today there is a big storm;
The autumn leaves are swept by the force of wind.
That is the meeting of wind and tree.

Emotion, what is that?
Longing for you is something deeper than my
 impression of you
And the memory could be carved on rock, something
 substantial.

Your letter is beautiful because it is written by you.
I hear Krishna playing his flute
In the long distance.

There needs to be courage from both you and me.
The words that I said will not fade
Because they are carved on this gigantic rock.

Your presence in my chamber
Still remains
As the presence of my Guru
In my mind.

Let's dance together
In the nondualistic air
Let's sing together
In the silent clarity.

Still there is sorrow
As oneness crowned with thorns and crucified.
But it's not the fault of Pontius Pilate;
It's beyond his stature and his power.

There have been many discoveries
Like a child collecting pebbles
I'm so pleased that you are the source of happiness.
You radiate light.

This is the gateway for you
As you enter this gate
You will find openness without effort.

Faith is most important
Nothing else matters.
It is the channel for everything.
Come, my darling,
Be open.
There is tremendous discovery
It is not you alone
If we both make the effort.

November 2, 1969
Garwald House
Eskdalemuir, Scotland

Song

A railway station,
People busy, involved in their affairs.
A park keeper,
Enjoying cutting the flowers with his secateurs,
Pruning the roses.
This life is normal to some people.
But to people like us it is not normal at all.
So many things happen—
They are all part of life.

A battlefield,
Innocent people being killed.
I am sure we could change the course of the bullet—
Wars are not fought for hate,
But for pursuing further development.

I saw in my mind innocent Easter.
Young as he was his whole head had been exploded.
To whom could I tell such neglect and cruelty?
Where does it come from?

I say no more.

This is a lonely song.
I sing in a peaceful valley

Where the glittering frost ignites with the spark of sun.
This beauty does not satisfy me.
Come my friends, who has got heart?
That we may dance
And come into effect,
Into the perpetual time.

November 20, 1969

In the North of the Sky

In the north of the sky there is a great and dark cloud
Just about to release a hailstorm.
Mind, children,
Mind, young puppies and kittens,
That your heads are not injured.
Yet these hailstorms are merely pellets of ice.

There were hundreds of magicians
Who tried to prevent storm and hail.
In the course of time
All the ritual hats, altars, and ritual garments
Have been blown away by the force of the hailstorms.

Here comes Chögyam disguised as a hailstorm.
No one can confront him.
It is too proud to say Chögyam is invincible,
But it is true to say he cannot be defeated.
Chögyam is a tiger with whiskers and a confident
   smile.
This is not a poem of pride
Nor of self-glorification:
But he is what he is.
He escaped from the jaw of the lion.

"Clear away," says the commander,
"You are standing on no-man's-land.
We do not want to shoot innocent people."
We cannot alter the path of the shell.
Once the bomb is released it knows its duty;
It has to descend.
Chögyam knows the course of his action.
He could be described as a skillful pilot;
He can travel faster than sound,
Faster than thoughts.
He is like a sharp bamboo dagger
That can exterminate pterodactyls
Or fast-moving boa constrictors.

I am not interested in playing games.
But what is a game?
It is a game when you shoot pheasants and deer.
You might say this is the game of the politicians,
Rather like the game of mah-jongg
Or that of chess.
Devoid of these games
I will sail straight through
Like a ship sailing through icebergs.
No one can change Chögyam's course,
His great odyssey.

The world waits,
Squirrels in the forest
And those of the moon
Listening in silence
Amidst gently moving clouds.
There is a force of silence
With energy
Which can never be interrupted.

With conviction and energy
I send my love to you.
I love you.

November 23, 1969

Good-bye and Welcome

"Good-bye"
"Welcome"
"Glad to meet you"
"How do you do"—
All this I hear
Echoing in the cave of social meeting,
And the echo goes on and on
Until it dies in the mountain depths,
Powerless to reflect.
But O World, O Universe,
My journey to the overseas continent needs no
copyright,
For it has never been conducted in the same manner.
It is the fresh meeting of man,
The true meeting of living man.
It is the pilgrimage,
The great odyssey which I have never feared,
Since I have not hesitated to flow with the river's
current.

With blessings and wisdom I write this poem,
As I am free once and for all
In the midst of friends who radiate true love.
Love to you all.

December 16, 1969

Meteoric Iron Mountain

Meteoric iron mountain piercing to the sky,
With lightning and hailstorm clouds round about it.
There is so much energy where I live
Which feeds me.
There is no romantic mystique,
There is just a village boy
On a cold wet morning
Going to the farm
Fetching milk for the family.
Foolishness and wisdom
Grandeur and simplicity
Are all the same
Because they live on what they are.
There is no application for exotic wisdom,
Wisdom must communicate
To the men of now.
Dharma is the study of what is
And fulfills the understanding of what is here right
  now.
The ripple expands when you throw the pebble:
It is true, a fact.
That is the point of faith,
Of full conviction,
Which no one can defeat or challenge.

Please, readers,
Read it slowly
So you can feel
That depth of calmness as you read.
Love to you.
I am the Bodhisattva who will not abandon you,
In accordance with my vow.
Compassion to all.

December 17, 1969

The Zen Teacher

The Zen teacher hates the horse
But the horse carries him;
At the river both depend on the boat.

For crossing the mountains
It is better to carry a stick.

American Good Intentions

So violent in achieving nonviolence
A journey to the moon and the discovery of kundalini
Spiritual testimonials and presidential promises
Law and order and militant monasticism
Colorful gurus on sale at the A&P
Buddhologists
Rosicrucians
Masons
Zen profundity
Benevolent Protective Order of Elks
Electricity by the megawatts
Potential children discover potential parents
Virginia aristocrats
New York Jews
Mississippi is a meaningless noun
Idaho with its potatoes
Cape Kennedy with its moon
Washington, D.C., with its clean-cut
Chicago with its notorious Mafiosi
Telegraph Avenue sells Himalayan art in Berkeley
Canadian internationalism a cheap copy of the U.S.'s
A franchised Ugandan dictator
Black
Yellow
Crimson

Purple
All are primitive jokes
White cons black into gray
War is an opportune time to create peace
Nationwide respectability fails to include street-trained
  dogs
Oath of Allegiance violates a sense of humor
Yellow cabs roar through skyscraper canyons
Urban jackals patrol the streets crying red white and
  blue
Officials entertaining foreign dignitaries
Are busy apologizing for the presence of radical
  demonstrators

Wide as American inspiration
Profound as American patriotism
Protector of the free world
Praiseworthy
Questionable
Dignity is the object
God save America, our karmic sweet home.

May 1972

Dö-me sem (Primordial Mind).

First Thought

First thought is best
Then you compose
Composition's what you compose—
In terms of what?
What is *what*
And *what* might not be the best
That what could be best
That *what-was* was the only best
Why didn't you?
The first thought was the first what
That what was the best what
What might not be is heartbroken
Heart is your only security
What shall we do?
What shouldn't we do?
What did you say?
I forgot what I was just about to say
I was just about getting interested
In what you have to say
I'm glad that you want to tell me
What you want to say
What was it that you wanted to tell me?
Is *that* so
That you want to tell me what he'd like to tell me
That wouldn't be difficult

But she might hesitate
It is problematic
In my honesty to tell you
What I would like to tell you
Who do you think is kidding who?
I have no kids
You are the star of the world
I didn't take part in starving
Moon is good enough
So is the earth
And the water
I take refuge in the Buddha as an example
I take refuge in the dharma as the path
I take refuge in the sangha as the companionship
I am that which I I I I
And so forth.

May 1972

Samsara and Nirvana

A crow is black
Because the lotus is white.
Ants run fast
Because the elephant is slow.
Buddha was profound;
Sentient beings are confused.

May 22, 1972

༄། །ཁྲོབ་པ་དང་ཞོར་བ། །

ཤི་མ་སྐྱོང་བའི་གསོན་པོ་དེ། །

ཉམས་སྐྱོང་མེད་པའི་ཕ་ཆམ་འདྲ། །

ཤི་ནས་གསོན་པོར་མ་གྱུར་པ། །

སྒོ་ཐུར་སྐྱུག་པར་གྱུར་པ་འདྲ། །

མཁས་མ་སྐྱོང་བའི་བླུན་པོ་དེ། །

ཡང་ཆོ་མེད་པའི་གཞོན་ནུ་འདྲ། །

བླུན་པོ་མཁས་པར་གྱུར་པ་དེ། །

སུ་ལྟོ་རྒྱལ་པོར་གྱུར་པ་འདྲ། །

ཨོ་ཧེ་བདག་པོར་གྱུར་པ་དེ། །

གསང་བ་ཧྲེའི་རྒྱལ་ཁ་ཐོབ་པ་འདྲ། །

ཨོ་ཧི་བདག་པོར་གྱུར་པ་དེ། །

མི་ལམ་བཟང་པོ་སད་པ་འདྲ། །

ཡིད་འདྲིས་གྲོགས་པོ་འཕྲད་པ་དེ། །

རང་གི་མཛད་དེབ་གློག་པ་འདྲ། །

གྲོགས་པོ་གསར་པ་རྙེད་པ་དེ། །

གླུ་གཞས་གསར་པ་རྩོམ་པ་འདྲ། །

ཆོས་རྒྱམ་སྐྱན་རག་བྲི་བ་དེ། །

རྒྱལ་པོས་དམག་རྩིས་ཡོན་པ་འདྲ། །

Gain and Loss

He who has not experienced death
Is like an inexperienced father.
He who has not come to life after death
Is like a man suddenly struck dumb.
He who has never been wise
Is like a youth who has never been beautiful.
The stupid man who becomes wise
Is like a beggar who becomes king.
The dog who becomes master
Is like the victor in the revolution.
The master who becomes a dog
Is like a man who has awakened from a pleasant
  dream.
Meeting an old friend
Is like reading your own autobiography.
Finding a new friend
Is like composing music.
Chögyam writing a poem
Is like a king inspecting his soldiers.

May 22, 1972

༄། ཟུར་ཟའི་ཡི་གེ།

།སྤྱི་བྲི་སོ་ཡི་སྦྲང་རྩི་བལྡུགས།

།མཁས་པའི་མིག་འཕྲས་ཡིག་ཆས་བརྟེན།

མཛེས་མ་འི་བཞིན་རས་ངོམ་པས་རྒྱས།

དཔའ་བོ་འཇིགས་མ་ཞེས་པས་ཤི།

འཁོར་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་གདམ་མོ་བྲི།

སྙན་གྲགས་ཅན་རྣམས་འོན་པར་གྱུར།

བཟོ་བའི་ལག་པ་གྲུམ་བུས་གཏུང་།

ཕྱི་ཞིབ་མར་མིའི་ནང་དུ་མཆོངས།

ལོང་བ་མི་སློན་ཐོག་ནས་འགྲོ།

ཞྭ་བོ་ཀང་བྲེའི་འཁོར་ལོས་རྒྱུག

བློན་པོ་གསུང་བཤད་ཟབ་ཅིང་མཁས།

གདམ་མོ་ཞོར་བའི་སྙན་ངག་མཁན།

དབུགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་བ་ཟད་ཏེ་ཐུང་།

ཆོས་པ་ཆོས་བཞིན་སྤྱོད་པས་འཁོར།

ཆོས་མ་སྤྱོད་ན་འཁོར་མི་ཤེས།

སྡིག་ཅན་ཆོས་བཞིན་འཁོར་མ་ཤེས།

འཁོར་མ་ཤེས་པ་སྲིད་ཀྱིས་འཁོར།

རྒྱལ་འབྱོར་རྒྱལ་འབྱོར་སྒོམ་པས་འཁོར།

རྩ་འཁོར་མེད་ན་རྒྱལ་འབྱོར་མིན།

ཆོས་རྒྱམ་འཁོར་བ་བལྟས་པས་འཁོར།

འཁོར་བ་མེད་ན་ཆོས་རྒྱམ་མེད།

Cynical Letter

Licking honey from a razor blade,
Eyes of the learned gouged out by books,
The beauty of maidens worn by display,
The warrior dead from not knowing fear—
It is ironical to see the dharma of samsara:
Celebrities deafened by fame,
The hand of the artist crippled by
 rheumatism.

The moth flew into the oil lamp,
The blind man walks with a torch,
The cripple runs in his wheelchair,
A fool's rhetoric is deep and learned,
The laughing poet
Has run out of breath and died.
The religious spin circles, in accordance
 with religion;
If they had not practiced their religion, they
 could not spin.
The sinner cannot spin according to religion;
He spins according to not knowing how to spin.
The yogis spin by practicing yoga;
If they don't have chakras to spin, they are not yogis.
Chögyam is spinning, watching the
 spinning/samsara;

If there is no samsara/spinning, there
is no Chögyam.

May 22, 1972

Dignified Rocky Mountain

THERE IS A BIG ROCKY mountain, like a dagger hoisted toward the sky, on which pine trees and long grasses grow. It is like a naked demon, standing erect wearing a bearskin. At the foot of this motionless rocky mountain flows a river, dark blue in color. Around the mountain the breeze blows, peaceful and gently cooling. The sun is waiting to set. In the distant meadow, on the other side of the marsh, on the grassy hill, almost out of sight, the shepherds are gathering their flocks of sheep into the fold. The mood is relaxed but uncertain. There is an air of desire for friendly conversation. Should one rest one's mind by gazing at the rocky mountain? Or, gazing at the river, should one listen to its melody? Or, listening to the call of the shepherd, should one perhaps look off into the distance? It is uncertain.

If the dignified mountain does not pierce the heavens,
Who cares if the blue sky falls into the river?
If the flock of sheep sleep peacefully in the fold,
Who cares if there is no friend to talk to?
Since thoughts, like feathers, are blown by the wind of
hope and fear,
The dignified poet remains wherever he is.

May 26, 1972

Charnel Ground

THE WASTELAND WHERE thorny trees grow and fearsome animals roam, a vast charnel ground. People deposit corpses of human beings, horses, camels, and other once-living things. Recently the surrounding country suffered famine and plague. People lost honor and dignity because they brought half-dead bodies to the charnel ground. Now ravens, crows, vultures, eagles, jackals, and foxes fight over the carrion. They are continually scooping out eyes, digging out tongues. Sometimes in fleeing from each other they let fall heads, arms, legs, internal organs. The wind carries the incense of rot. The amusing theater of life and death is performing constantly. Self-existing energy is like a wave of the ocean driven by a mighty wind. There is a new display in every corner of the scene. Sometimes one would like to look at them but does not dare. Nevertheless one cannot prevent one's eyes focusing. Occasionally there are flickering thoughts of escape. Sometimes one does not believe what he sees, regards it as a dream. But if one tries to find the moment he went to sleep, it is not there.

> When the plague, accompanied by famine, arises,
> The tigers and vultures have a feast.
> Comparing the delicacies of tongues and eyes,
> Logicians find a new study.
> Perhaps one cannot imagine it, but seeing removes all
>   doubt.
> This is the world of existence: daring not to exist.

May 26, 1972

Philosopher Fool

THERE IS A FAMOUS snow mountain capped with mist, like a king wearing a crown. It is said that from this mountain one may see the North and South Poles simultaneously. This mountain is encircled by other awesome rocky snow mountains, like a king surrounded by his queen and ministers. At the foot of this range lies a valley famous as a retreat for meditators. The air is redolent with the fragrance of herbs and mountain freshness. Workers, toiling endlessly, have dreamed of visiting this place. In this peaceful and beautiful forest grow flowering willows, blossoming rhododendrons, beech, pines, and many wildflowers. There is a waterfall, like white silk scarves hanging. The sound of falling water is inviting.

Near the waterfall stands a simple stone house, uncluttered by ostentatious ornament. It blends easily into the rocky landscape. Inside, the pillars and beams are of cedar. In the front, a large window opens onto a porch. Blue smoke once lifted gently from the chimney and disappeared into the sky. Here lived a famous scholar. His room was completely lined with books. He enjoyed the beauty of nature and was competent in the fields of philosophy, art, medicine, and poetry. He spent all his time in taking long walks and in reading and writing. Occasionally, dwelling in retreat, he suppressed memories of work and struggle in his earlier life in the cities. He treated his servant-disciple in a fatherly manner, but with a certain measure of pride and disdain, which insured his obedience and efficiency. He instructed his disciple in all matters, from how to brew tea and cook food to the fine points of philoso-

phy. His servant never spoke to him, for his time was taken up with listening to the scholar.

Once they took a walk, and his servant warned him that the bridge they were about to cross was unsafe. But the scholar would not listen. For an answer, the teacher said, "The scope of my vision is much greater than yours." As he trod on the bridge, it collapsed and he died in the turbulent river.

In the pure land of the beautiful snow ranges
Lived a learned man, a poisonous flower with venom-
nectar.
The disease of pride turned him deaf and dumb.
On hearing a word of advice, he committed suicide.
A man foolishly wise is like a leper;
A wisely foolish man is like a baby learning to walk.
To ride the horse of knowledge, it is necessary to have
a saddle.

May 27, 1972

Does Love Kill Anybody?

Does love kill anybody?
What is the sound of one hand clapping?
Love is not a burden, my dear!
Poetry is not a burden for the true poet.
The notion of "chain"
The notion of "blade"
Flowers
Honey
The moon
Chrysanthemums
Sweet smile
Teenager
College kids
Sharpened pencil
Incense sticks by the dozen
Red ribbons in your hair
Coca-Cola advertisements which speak of "action"
Sportsmanship
Skiing in the snow
A red pullover
Drinking cool beer
Be a sportsman in a unisex outfit
Sky-blue with red passion-stripes
Go-go person with wings on your sneakers

Intercontinental cosmopolitan sportsman getting into
the love—
More poetry
More literature
Tokyo Cairo New Delhi Taj Mahal Paris
Blond hair of Oslo blond mule blond Pekingese—
Arabs brew good coffee,
But stabbing each other with a jewel-inlaid hack knife
is another matter.
Love by telephone
Writing a love letter is creating a mistress
Bachelor creates mistress by making a date
Mind's duplicity
Run
Kick
Philosopher
Technocrats
Autocrats
Are bound by a unilateral declaration—
Money is no object.
What the wind sweeps,
What the fires burn,
I fall in love
Because love falls into me at home.
Rock is not lovable
But its not-lovableness is lovable.
Take a thistle to bed
And make love to it.

June 5, 1972

Our Seduction

Unavailability is the way,
The path that you have shown to me.
You taught me expectations are false;
You are the embodiment of the truth.
Your glamorous qualities are your teaching;
I surrender to you, oh dakini.
Form is not an image that I can hang on to;
Your formlessness in seduction is your form.
I bow down to your magnificent form.
You are, perhaps, wrapped up in dualistic "this" and
  "that,"
But my faith in your *is*ness reveals your nature is
  all-encompassing space.
I love you, my dear.
Because my loving you does not express love and hate,
Your totality expresses the universality of you.
You are glamorous—your dark hair blown by the wind.
Your embryonic bosom contains an openness.
I salute you who are the creator of glamorous qualities
  which deceive you,
The glamorous quality of earth, of water, of fire, and
  so forth.
Your universality is thought provoking.
I love you.

June 5, 1972

A Letter to Marpa

Solid Marpa
Our father,
The message of the lineage:
You are the breadwinner.
Without your farm we would starve to death.
Fertilizing
Plowing
Sowing
Irrigating
Weeding
Harvesting;
Without your farm we are poverty stricken.
Your stout body,
Sunburnt face;
Ordering Damema to serve beer for a break;
Evidence of the three journeys you made to India in
you—
We sympathize with you for your son's death:
It was not the fault of the horse,
It was the seduction of the stirrup in which his foot
was caught
As his head smashed into the boulders of
conceptualization.
Yet you produced more sons:
Eagle-like Milarepa who dwells in the rocks,

Snow lion–like Gampopa whose lair is in the Gampo
hills,
Elephant-like Karmapas who majestically care for their
young.
Tiger-like Chögyam roaming in foreign jungles.
As your lineage says, "The grandchildren are more
accomplished than the parents."
Your garuda egg hatches
As the contagious energy of mahamudra conquers the
world.
We are the descendants of lions and garudas.

June 6, 1972

ཐ་ལས་ཉེས་ཏེ་མ་ལ་བཙོང་།
ཕེ་སང་ཐོབ་པ་གྲོགས་པོར་བྱིན།
རྐུན་མས་འཕྲོག་མ་ནུས་པའི་ནོར།
ང་རྒྱལ་ཁྲོད་ཀྱི་ཕ་ཟློག་ཡིན།

མཁས་པ་རང་མགོ་རྩལ་བ་ན།
ཁོང་གི་ཞང་ཡང་འདོན་པར་སྒྱུར།
སློབ་མ་ལོང་བའི་ལྷུ་ཚོགས་རྣམས།
མཁས་པའི་དབུ་མ་མཐོང་བས་ལེན།

གསར་དུ་བསྐོས་པའི་སློབ་དཔོན་དེ།
གསུང་བཤད་བཙན་པོའི་བཀའ་ཁྲབ་འདྲ།
ཉམས་མྱོང་ཅན་གྱི་སློབ་མ་ཚོས།
བཀའ་འདྲི་ཟབ་པོ་དྲིས་པས་ལེན།

ཟློག་པོ་འདྲེན་པར་མཐོང་ནས་སུ།
ལུས་སྲོག་འབུལ་བའི་སྨྲུན་དང་ཅན།
གཡར་དྲ་ཞེན་བཞིན་གཉིད་ཁུག་པས།
དྲ་ཡིས་བྱི་ལོག་ཁྱེར་བ་འདྲ།

Aphorisms

You bought it from your father, you sold it to your
mother,
You shared the profit with friends;
Thieves can't steal this wealth—
Your family heirloom is arrogance.

When the scholar's head rots
His nose becomes deaf.
It's the fault of the blind students
Who fail to see his head.

The lecture of the newly appointed teacher
Sounds like a general's orders.
It's the fault of the senior students
For asking profound questions.

Mistaking a charlatan for a savior
And offering him one's life with blind faith
Is like falling asleep on a borrowed horse:
The horse will return to its owner.

The restless poet who composes
A verse in praise of mountain solitude
Is like a criminal turned judge
Writing a textbook on law.

The insight which transcends mind
And the mind which activates awareness
Are like a healthy youth
Who has good eyes and legs.

November 7, 1972

The Nameless Child

THERE IS A MOUNTAIN of gold. When the sun's rays strike it, it is irritating to look at. It is surrounded by red, green, yellow, orange, pink, and liver-colored clouds, wafted gently by the wind. Around the mountain fly thousands of copper-winged birds with silver heads and iron beaks. A ruby sun rises in the east and a crystal moon sets in the west. The whole earth is covered with pearl-dust snow. Upon it a luminous child without a name instantaneously comes into being.

> The golden mountain is dignified, the sunlight is
>   blazing red.
> Dreamlike clouds of many colors float across the sky.
> In the place where iron birds croak,
> The instantaneously born child can find no name.

Because he has no father, the child has no family line. Because he has no mother, he has never tasted milk. Because he has neither brother nor sister, he has no one to play with. Having no house to live in, he cannot find a crib. Since he has no nanny, he has never cried. There is no civilization, so he cannot find toys. Since there is no point of reference, he doesn't know a self. He has never heard spoken language, so he has never experienced fear.

The child walks in every direction, but does not come across anything. He sits down slowly on the ground. Nothing happens. The colorful world seems sometimes to exist and sometimes not. He gathers a handful of pearl dust and lets it trickle through his

fingers. He gathers another handful and slowly takes it into his mouth. Hearing the pearl dust crunch between his teeth, he gazes at the ruby sun setting and the crystal moon rising. Suddenly, a whole galaxy of stars wondrously appears and he lies on his back to admire their patterns. The nameless child falls into a deep sleep, but has no dreams.

The child's world has no beginning or end.
To him, colors are neither beautiful nor ugly.
The child's nature has no preconceived notion of birth
and death.
The golden mountain is solid and unchanging,
The ruby sun is all-pervading,
The crystal moon watches over millions of stars.
The child exists without preconceptions.

November 3, 1972

The Myth of Freedom

AN INTELLIGENT AND highly emotional young man, disliking the hustle and bustle of the city and the impositions of friends and relatives, decided to leave. He set out on foot and soon found himself crossing pleasant valleys and woods. He found a solitary and peaceful spot and decided to settle there. He enjoyed the sight of wild animals roaming freely, and flocks of birds.

> As the moonlight of peace and solitude spreads,
> Wild animals roam free and harmless.
> The wild flowers and trees are glamorous,
> The scent of herbs is pervasive.
> Who wouldn't take delight in this solitude, worthy to
> be praised by Brahma?

At times the young man dwelling in solitude is full of joy, at times he is afraid. Sometimes he has thoughts of the city and the years spent with his relatives and friends. Sometimes he feels uncomfortable at being in the mountain emptiness and becomes afraid that wild animals will attack him. He has ample supplies of food, but still he has the constant fear of running out. He has looked at the delightful landscape too long, and now it appears irritatingly monotonous. The tuneful song of the birds becomes mocking. He can't get to sleep at night, so he feels very tired during the day, and the boundary between waking experience and dream becomes fuzzy. Altogether, he suffers continually from paranoia and daydreams, and doesn't know what to do. He is imprisoned in his own projections.

The external projection is empty of good and bad,
The internal fixation of hope and fear imprisons.
Truth and falsehood are at war.
The simple-minded child is wounded by the arrow of
confusion.

Sometimes he thinks of returning to the city and sometimes he thinks of hiding in the nearest village. He just wants to leave the desolate countryside. Finally, he ties his things into a bundle and goes back to the city. He meets his friends and relatives, but the fear he felt in his desolate retreat continues to haunt him. Sometimes he sees his friends and relatives as illusory maidens dancing, and sometimes as a threatening army. In the midst of such uncertainty, he wishes he could find a friend with whom to discuss the whole thing. But he doesn't know how to find a friend who is not an illusion. So the young man tries to find the boundary between illusion and reality.

When the endless illusory plot is all-pervading,
The folly of mind's limitless duplicity is uncovered.
By running away from friends you discover illusory
friends.
Friends manifesting as enemies is the nature of illusion;
By projecting your duplicity on others you lose your
own ground.
The friend who is not an illusory projection is found
in yourself.

November 5, 1972

Haiku

The beginner in meditation
Resembles a hunting dog
Having a bad dream.

His parents are having tea
With his new girlfriend—
Like a general inspecting the troops.

Skiing in a red and blue outfit,
Drinking cold beer with a lovely smile—
I wonder if I'm one of them?

Coming home from work,
Still he hears the phone
Ringing in the office.

Gentle day's flower—
The hummingbird competes
With the stillness of the air.

November 7, 1972

The Red Flag Flies

The red flag flies above the Potala,
The people of Tibet are drowned in an ocean of blood;
A vampire army fills the mountains and plains,
But self-existing dignity never wanes.

November 10, 1972

The Sword of Hatred

The sword of hatred is ornamented with the handle of
invasion,
A red star has imprisoned the sun and moon,
The high snow-peaked mountains are cloaked in the
darkness of a poisonous wind;
The peaceful valleys have been shattered by the sound
of artillery.
But the dignity of the Tibetan people competes with
the glory of the sky.

November 10, 1972

ཕྱུག་རྒྱུ་བདེ་བར་བཀྲམ་པའི་ཕྱང་ལྷོངས་མེ་ཏོག་གཡུ་བཞིན་མཛེས་པས་བཀྲབ། །

ཁ་ཏུ་ཏུང་སྨྲ་སྒྲོགས་བཞིན་ཐང་ཞིང་ཡུལ་གཞིས་སྐྱ་གར་གདམ་གླིང་བག་ཡང་རྒྱེད།། །

ཐུག་དམར་རྗོད་ཚང་ཅན་གྱི་དབུ་རྩེ་ར་ལྷ་ཐོའི་དར་ཚ་རླུང་གིས་བསྒྱོད་ལ་བལྟ། །

འཕྲོག་པའི་ཕྱུག་ལས་སྐྲས་ནག་པོར་སྦྲ་ཁྱིམ་རྩེ་ནས་དུད་པ་སྔོན་པོ་དལ་བུས་ཡར།

སྣ་མཆོད་མགྲོན་དུ་འབེབས་པའི་ཐ་དང་དུང་གི་རོལ་མོས་གྲགས་ཆ་རྒྱང་ནས་སྒྲོགས།། །

ས་མཐོ་བོད་ཀྱི་གངས་ཅན་ཡུལ་ལྗོངས་མཛལ་བས་དགའ་སྤྲོའི་བློ་སྣ་ལྷོག་ཏུ་མེད།། །

ལ་མོ་སྔོན་ཐུག་བཏུལ་ཀྱང་ས་མཐའ་མ་མཐོང་རླུང་གི་བ་ཤུད་སྒྲུར་ཉིན་བཞིན་བསྒྲོད།། །

རྒྱུ་བོ་སྔོན་ཐུག་བཏུལ་ཀྱང་གནམ་མཐའ་མ་རྙེད་རྒྱུ་སྐར་ཤིག་ཏམ་འཆར་ཉིན་པས་སྲུན།། །

ཐག་རིང་འགྲོབ་པའི་སྤྲ་ནག་མཐོང་བར་འདུན་མ་གཏད་ནས་བསྐྱོད་ཀྱང་སླེབ་རྒྱུ་མེད།། །

ཏ་དྲིལ་རལ་དུབ་ཚེ་བས་རྩ་རྒྱ་མེ་ཞིང་འཛམ་ཤར་སྟོད་ཤུར་བརྒྱབ་ན་བསམ། །

Silk Road

A herd of sheep roam on the meadows ornamented
with turquoise flowers;
The crow caws on the pine branch, conversing easily
with the magpie.
Flags flutter on a cairn, on a red rock peak where
vultures nest.
From a black tent amidst dark old yak folds smoke rises
gently,
And the conchs and drums of invited lamas echo in the
distance—
Irrepressibly happy and sad to see the highlands of the
snow land Tibet.

Traveling, listening to the whistling wind, crossing
thousands of ridges but still not seeing the end of
the earth;
Irritated by the gossip of the brooks, crossing
thousands of rivers but still not reaching the end of
the sky;
Never reaching the goal of the nomad's black tent in
the distance—
It is too tiring for the horses and mules; better to pitch
our tent where pasture, water, and firewood are
plentiful.

November 10, 1972

Tibetan Pilgrim

On the right, a mountain with juniper trees—at its foot
a farmhouse topped with white prayer flags—is like
a minister on a tigerskin seat.
On the left, a mountain covered with tamarisk
trees—at its foot a farm filled with beautiful green
wheat and barley—is like a queen on a silken
throne.
Straight ahead, a rocky mountain rises above a
monastery with glittering gold roofs like a king on
a throne of gold.
An old pilgrim feasts his eyes on the richness of some
merchant's camp, and patiently continues toward
Lhasa.

November 10, 1972

Trans World Air

On perfecting the Sky Dance
Naropa wore out Doctrine
Metal mirror polished now
Syllable AH's image shines
Young moon searches out a Love
Hearing raven croak caw caw
Snowy mountain's song echoes
Raising dusty golden mists—
Better drop your iron pants.

October 29, 1973

Translated from the Tibetan by Chögyam Trungpa and Allen Ginsberg

A Flower Is Always Happy

A flower is always happy because it is beautiful
Bees sing their song of loneliness and weep
A waterfall is busy hurrying to the ocean
A poet is blown by the wind.

A friend without inside or outside
And a rock that is not happy or sad
Are watching the winter crescent moon
Suffering from the bitter wind.

February 2, 1974

True Tantra Groupie

Sunset or sunrise in the tantra group—
The wicked people with pocket money
Are supposed to be truly dangerous.

Students of vajrayana watching the glow of fire
Toasting their emotions
Might happen to eat them
With a thin spread of butter flavored with marmalade.

It is good that the fire is burning
That the water is flowing,
Stars in the galaxies are in their appropriate places.
The universe is lovable
To the extent that simultaneous orgasm can be shared.

Fire is red
Sky is blue
Grass is green—
Things as they are.
But they speak an unspeakable utterance:
That they have the right to complain.

Fire is red
Sky is blue
Grass is green

Fire is red
Sky is blue
Grass is green
Fire is red
Sky is blue
Grass is green

Who said that . . .

July 5, 1974

"Tantra group" in line 1 refers to students meeting together to study the vajrayana teachings.

Glorious Bhagavad-Ghetto

Hawk is silly
Because of its hawkishness,
Good is bad
Because of its goodishness.
Bad is so good
Because of its bluntness.
Raven vulture lizard
A monk a nun
A dog a cat
Venerable mosquito
Sick frog
Healthy guinea pig
Giant grain of sand—
They all speak a mutual language:
Who we are
What we are
Maybe we are
The neighbors might know about us.
Do the neighbors know the tantra?
What is tantra?
Is black black?

Thanks be to the wise or the stupid,
Mrs. Jones
Mr. McLean.

Glory be to the rain
That brought down
Concentrated pollution
On the roof of my car
In the parking lot.

July 5, 1974

Tail of the Tiger

Darkness is good
With an incense stick burning,
Herbert speaks good language
Which becomes onomatopoeic,
Jews Jew
Because of Gentiles,
Thunder is good
It knows the mountains,
Food is bad for you
It makes you eat more,
Magic is contagious
Because there is none.
What is magic?
What isn't magic?
Is food shelter?
Or is shelter food?
The magicians are magpies,
A tiger is a poodle,
Having a tail is equal to a stiff upper lip,
Giant is dwarf—
Have a baby-sitter!
Don't tread on the tail of a flea.

July 5, 1974

Naropa Institute, 1974

Long live the longest one
But we should be kind to the short ones
Flea on the Empire State Building
Mosquito in the Taj Mahal
Eiffel Tower like a growth on your thumb
The world is good!
But bad in many ways
On the other hand
Bad and good makes the world feel
Not so good
But at the same time
It makes it feel good
It's a checkerboard:
Good is bad
Bad is good
Goodbad! is good
Goodbad! is bad
Badgoodgood
Goodbadbad
Goodie is baddie
In the realm of
Goodgoodgood
At the same time
Badbadbad
If we take a cross-section

Badgood badgood
On the other hand
Goodbad goodbad
He is goodly bad
Therefore she could not be
She is badly good
Therefore he could not be
Mutually they are
Goodly bad badly good
Therefore they could be
Because of it
Bad is good
Bad is good
Bad is good
We are at a loss
Lost is good
Lost isn't good
Facts are figures
Figures are facts
Figurefacts figurefacts figurefacts
Facts are no figures
Figures no facts
John is not Mary
Mary is not John
John Mary John Mary John Mary
Oliver
Olivia
Teeth and tongue
Teeth can't be cooked
But tongue is delicious for a meal
Facts are not figures
But figures are facts
Computer is good
Because

Sun!
Moon!
Star!
Greenery!
Blue flower!
Honey!
Woodpecker!
Railroad!
Lotus pond Marvin Casper
Smile of dark-haired girl
Seduction of the blond
Blond moth
Pekingese pony
Graceful ant
Cockroaches in a New York apartment
Eiffel Tower
Empire State Building
Guards with handsome uniforms
Policeman blowing whistle musically
Ginsberg being pedantic
Joshua Zim in New Mexico
New New New
New New New
New England
New Mexico
Blacks don't get their privilege
Flying helicopter with cameramen
Honeymoon
Inspired glamorous youth
Wants to be made love to
Silk scarf
Nouveau riche
Good to be with
Jews or Gentiles
Are no longer the question

In the realm of youthful exuberance
Skiing in the mountains
Metaphysical debate
Glorious to be the dogshit in Brooklyn
Glorious to be in the glaciers of the Grand Tetons
Halvah is good to eat
Cheesecake is questionable
May they both be blessings on us
Facts and figures no longer important
January could afford to affront
February it's subordinate
March felt youthful
April is adolescent
Grass is green
Fire is ember
Turquoise is black
From the view of coral
World is good
Good is world
Bad is goodworld
Goodworld is bad
Let us bring
Venus
Glorious to be Ram Dass
When he sweats
With beads of perspiration in his hair.

Duncan Campbell
The moderator
Hot and cold
In moderation
Bewildered Baker
Overcooked Green
Open Secret oven

Glory be to them
While Chögyie and Dassie
Are cooking
Sweetsour curry rockBoulder
Glorious to be
Glorious to be
Glorious to be
Mining town
RockBoulder
Boulderrock
Good living in bhakti
So-called.
GOOD
BAD
BAD
GOOD
Bhakti
Shopper
Realism
Dilettante
Grasshopper
Devoted moth
Confused ant
Spiritual materialism
Syringe
Good grass
Fancy bread
Bhakti provocation
In the name of goodness
Complementary speech
In the name of Trungpa
Everything is good
Ram Dass is cult
In spite of the Baba

Square is round
Rock is water
Fire is tree
Impregnation is abortion
So unpleasant
Embarrassment of Ram Dass
Cutting through is love-and-lighty
Failure is complement
The world of goodness is full of fleas
Glorious to be the inspired true-believer
Hurricane!
Storm!
Thunderstorm!
Redandwhite redandwhite
RedAndWhite
REDANDWHITE
True blue of dharmakaya
Is the only solution,
Devoid of Jacob Needleman.

July 12, 1974
Boulder, Colo.

Pema Yumtso

Gayle Beth
She is not certain
Seagulls
Moth
Honeymooners
Ring of her dead lover
Bees
Wasp
Wise owl
Clark Kent
Yeshiva
Black and white
Flamingos asleep on one leg
Giraffes are not Jews
Zebra likes bucking people
Glory be to Gayle
She's such a nice girl
Only if . . .
She's such a nice girl
Only if . . .
Only if . . .
If . . .
If . . .
She is truly what she claims
She is Mona Lisa

She isn't Mona Lisa
Is she?
Or isn't she?
If she sleeps on one leg like flamingo
She is
But then she's not giraffe
Zebra
Is she a lioness
A tigress?
Maybe she is
She seems to be palm tree
She is white raven
She is musician
Dancing on the strings of piano
She's a little gypsy girl
She's cute
She's powerful
She's the lily of the hidden valley
She's not secular
She's sacred
She's holy
She's immaculate
She's complainatory
She is her
She is blue
She's white
She's turquoise lake
She is what she is
She's angry woman
She's kind woman
She deserves what she is
Oh! she
Oh! she
She is Oh! she

Oh! she
Truth of the matter is
Just between us
She *is* tiger lily.

August 1, 1974

To Britain's Health

Such sharpness
Such honesty
The world is made of truth and lie
Truth of deception
Who buys that?
Jigsaw puzzle is true
Cyclops doesn't see double vision
World's sportsman
World's prettiest girl
Demanded by mankind of the world
Proud woman
Sharpened pencil
Peacock with dots
Hallucinogenic drugs
Golden Syrup
In the name of Her Majesty the Queen
Hollow cock
Rotten wood
Cathy McCullough at the campfire
I told you
You told me
I'm sorry I forgot
I wasn't paid for this
Humorous Jack Elias
Bob Halpern as jewel merchant

Tile of Mexico
Let us have a bullfight
Sword of prajna
Impeachment of the Buddha
Holy Dalai Lama
Quarterhorse
Mustang
Stallion
Honorable discharge
English saddle
Smell of good leather
Glory be to our Queen
Long live the Elizabeth the Second
My Queen
Toward whom I feel integrity
Long live the Queen
Stiff upper lips
Pleasing British leather saddle
Equitation
Diana Judith
Union Jack
Red white and blue
Glory be to Elizabeth the Second
The rushes of Scotland
Swamps of Northumberland
The dimples of the Lake District
Plains of Salisbury
White chalky shores of Dover and Devonshire—
There is something nice about our Kingdom
Glory be to Diana and her English nose
Foggy London
Confident boys
Union Jack flying
In the midst of traffic in Piccadilly

Still majestically bearing the symbol of St. George
And St. Andrew
St. Patrick
My second home
Glory be to the thistles, clover
And the royal rose
Cockney accent
The Liverpool accent
The Midlander's
The Welsh, Scottish
And the Irish
Such rich people
Enjoying the bank holiday at Blackpool—
May the Kingdom last long
May the Kingdom last long free from the Tory
The Labor
The Liberal
May Her Majesty ride on a powerful white horse
With her banner fluttering in the winds of English
  country power.

August 1, 1974

Lion Roars Sunset over Rockies' East Slope

This spontaneous linked verse poem was spoken into a tape recorder by Chögyam Trungpa and Allen Ginsberg at 1111 Pearl Street in Boulder, Colorado, on August 1, 1974. In this transcription Chögyam Trungpa's lines are set in roman type. Allen Ginsberg's lines are set in italics.

In the realm of no-mind
there was Naropa Institute.
Yellow sun fell over Rockies as whispering poets completed
their thoughts.
Then there was a lion's roar,
which is no mind's claim;
that mind doesn't exist;
but there is still lingering lion's roar
proclaiming Naropa Institute,
in the form of the tiny purring of wheels and tracking of
manganese oxide across electric grids.
Form is empty,
emptiness is form,
therefore we got the birth of the either, neither, or the
other.
"So no rush," spoke the machine.
Naropa was hassled by an old hag who mocked him by
saying, "You don't understand the meaning behind
the words."
By my gray beard the old hag spoke wrong!
Wrongness is old hat as it is,

as it was, as it should be,
as it might be, so forth.
What would Naropa do with bone and cunt thereafter?
Either the word or sense
which you can't figure out,
he was in trouble,
had to seek Tilopa.
Tilopa in his animal skin solitude was thinking,
thinking nothing,
except eating fish
which he caught with his bare hands and eyeballs by the
silvery waterside,
by the dozen,
and cooked or ate raw;
ate raw,
because that is rawness of life.
Strange sashimi in some mountain nook!
Milking the rock, eating the fire, in order to quench
your thirst. Tomorrow we visit the freak show.
And the fish eyes were stars,
as brilliant as the crescent moon,
which is October 8th day.
Match lit, smoke risen,
turned into clouds,
dissolve like fish powder in the broken mind.
Glorious to be Tilopa,
Glory be to Tilopa!
Glory be to Allen Ginsberg!
Glory be to Chögyam Trungpa!
Glory be to the air conditioner!
Likewise
in the red suspenders on which everything hangs. Yes!
If there is no dharma drum
let us beat on the drum of no-dharma,

which is still the drum of the dharma.
And if there's no God, then let's beat
on the height of the gondola!
Let us proclaim
that—
This! Nothingness! Everything at the same time!
What will the startled-multitudes shriek out in their subway slumber?
They are out in the countryside, where the jungles and forests and rocks and stars are immaculate.
Will they be able to put their 35¢ tokens in the slot machine if there ain't no God?
It is possible because of it.
Will they be able to look at the new lion's eyes in the Bronx Zoo if there's no God?
It is possible because of it.
Will they be able to sail over the Atlantic in giant disappearing ocean liners if there's no God?
It is possible because of it.
Will they be able to ascend over the earth in silvery spaceships blasting atomic fossil fuel behind—
it
them
is highly possible because of it, my dear.
Will they be able to—it is highly possible because of it, my dear—will they—
That is questionable sweetheart.
Okay, honey, they will.
Who knows who they are,
what are they?
They're your-my grandmother with her long pink nightie, neatly embroidered at the edges, sleeping in her skull in grave lawn—
They are the people who used to gather together in the corral

with the horses, mules, and donkeys
celebrating the end of the War on Times Sq.,
and celebrating the beginning of the War
in Piccadilly.
Ties you on hunh.
Fat pussy cream.
Anything you say, sir.
Even in the darkest jungles of Congo,
or the marketplace at Ulan Bator?
The darkest of the darkest,
the darkest of the darkest,
the darkest of the darkest,
the darkest of the darkest,
the darkest of the darkest,
THE DARKEST OF THE DARKEST:
delightful because it is so dark;
therefore it is light.
Coming on in here,
with yer flashlight,
looking for a flask—
Candle's ring! Hamburger!
That's what became of the Lion's Roar, a hamburger by the
sake cupside?
Sake comes out of the Lion's Roar,
hamburger comes out of the Lion's Roar!
Glorious to be Naropa and his hags!
But the old tale teller said pure water poured out of the lion's
ear—
Who knows,
there's mystery in the past.
They say 'twas a man was inspired by a God!
God was inspired by a man
only repeating old tales told by firelight when people were
scared of the lightning.

Precisely,
there is lightning because there are dragons,
  hurricanes, crocodiles, frogs, lizards, and flies,
submicroscopic bacteria ascending kundalini pathways
  toward the neckbone.
There is no neck,
so there is no bone.
so microscopic galaxies proclaiming their lion roar—?
Lion doesn't roar,
that was a joke,
but roar roars the lion.
So microscopic roars produce vast neon lions.
Submachine guns.
Just all done in the line of duty, sir, said the lion departing,
with his tail wrapped between his legs, slinking off,
who knows where.
Let us bring the unicorn along.
Unicorn objected, "I was the seed of Christ, Son of the King
  of Heaven, Lord of the Universe, ruler of all, central
  authority, identical with CIA."
CIA is a product of mind,
Communist party product of daydream,
product of nightmare.
Look! Look!
The Nazis are coming again?
Is that why there're whispers in the marketplace?
Nazis are Nazis,
they have run out of Jews to persecute.
Jews have begun the machine gun attack on Allah.
Allah is freegul frugal,
parsimonious;
Sufism,
dances a lot,
talks a lot,

overflowing with divine love,
to the sweet cistern
which flows to the ocean overheard.
Ocean might be contaminated—
Vast ocean herself with all her dolphins, whales, swimming unicorns?
Maybe this will save—
sick rat is a cunning and a good one,
has beady eyes;
cockroach survives radiation.
Glorious to be them,
free from Sufism, Hinduism, Buddhism,
free from Chögyam Trungpa, Allen Ginsberg, President Nixon, and pairs of—
all the rest of it!
And pairs of eyeglasses!
And all the rest of it!
Glorious to be the roar of the motorcycle noise down the dusk street,
that is the Lion's Roar.
Glorious to be the beady-eyed squirrel, stealing nuts from the campground!
Glorious to be the saint,
Glorious to be a grain of sand, waving its arms in the desert;
By trying to be one,
exploring thousands means,
by a thousand means,
flopping into one.
One doesn't produce zero,
One began the goy—
one begins anything you want,
one began Jupiter;
one begins anything you want,
one begins the squeal of lizards, swimming in the ocean frost;

one begins anything you want,
one begins vast scaley fishlike dinosaurs;
one begins anything you want,
one begins the nimbus after clear days, rainless months;
one begins anything you want,
but one doesn't exist.
One therefore begins the full moon,
crescent moon, on the 8th day of the lunar calendar.
On 8th day lunar calendar what monster was born?
What being was born, if you prefer me there? Buddha?
hum. . . .
Cause I don't know the reference, that's why—
Person with no tail,
no hair on his chest, but brilliant eyes
which look at you.
Person with spine and big feet approaching you,
with open hand,
carrying a scepter,
crowned with water garlands,
shivering with nervousness,
stammering, embarrassed by elephants,
now that he or you conquered the world,
swept under the dustbin cabinet with the starving mice.
The mice shit beautifully,
in beautiful pellets,
the cat smells hungrily round the garage door.
They have flying cats
here, the unicorns waving the iridescent feathers,
fitting the encyclopedia and dictionary with lights,
large, gawky professorial tomes with long tongues,
and beady eyeglasses,
and the appearance of living dress.
Glorious to be lack, lack of love,
Glorious to be beady-eyed, rat-nosed professors of mental
technology,

on their way to the jail,
the plane money in their pockets, to say goodbye.
Their deceptions are too cute,
but they got a good lawyer,
their lies too self-spoken,
and the lawyer recognizes them, nullity of the judge,
tongue twister,
speechmaker,
crocodile,
good man to have if you have a murder rap,
alligatorial smile,
all televised before the public with great solemn conventional debate,
shedding the crocodilean tears,
fell down to the crocodilean shoes.
Argentina,
the Argentinean yogi!
More walk gently,
a child shoed softly,
a white dragon is no offense,
stinging monster with pleasure, gunslinger,
kindness is no offense,
no horror zoo, in the fence.
"I can" is regarded as reminder to—
because it says think and please,
before and after.
Typhon bows and scrapes at the door.
Your house is burned;
What shall we do?
said the whirlwind rushing up with showers of water.
Fire Department's inadequate!
Call in the National Guardian Angels!
What nationality are we?
Perfect Planetarian.

What planet are we in?
The place where we're sitting.
Where are we sitting?
1111 Pearl Street, at Naropa Institute.
Call them up!
You mean the sun? Each sunbeam? No telephones in that atmosphere . . .
Really?
We'll leave them alone.
Let 'em sleep.
How about the stars?
Stars—got work to do.
How about the mosquitoes
buzzing around our ears?
They are a helpful sign.
How about the secretary?
She types with tattoo-like fingers, like proboscis of tiny winged anvils, entering the skin.
Maybe the secretary might perspire,
and she might change her gearshift.
Maybe crocodile tears aspire to Lion's Roar—
Lion's Roar—
good for you,
let us proclaim Lion's Roar;
But will we include lion's jaw that bites us so hard, to the death?
Can't, they're in your ears, lion's loudness, without getting near the toothsome cage.
The work in London is full of Vicarity
hard enough for rubber booted climbers to rejoice on
. . . soaked in blood,
eaten by a Rocky Mountain coyote.
Loud wails in the moonlight as the predators get their dangling fix!

My manuscript is disorder,
my mind perfectly clear,
My work is no work,
but a worklessness;
my play makes the iron cow sweat.
Shall we push the red button?
It was pushed, sire, aeons ago.
How about pushing this snow mountain and this red
  button?
How about pushing the roof?
Glories be to it,
Glorious to be its.
The anger can't be defined,
Nor need to be pronounced, nor worried about, anymore—
Thank you.

August 1, 1974

Supplication to the Emperor

You are a rock
You are our foundation
You can cause a landslide
You can shake the earth
You are all the elements
You burn
You quench thirst
You sustain
You are the creator of turbulent fresh air
You sit like a mountain
The world is your throne
The world is helpless
You and your Kagyü lineage
Are the only living monarchs on earth.

Inter-cosmopolitan politics
International Ballistic Missile
Internal Revenue Service for rich hippie spiritual
  shoppers—
In the Age of Darkness
Your multiple all-pervasive macro-precision dharma-
  insight is so penetrating:
Amidst a flock of black sheep
A flock of black pigeons
A depressed herd of buffaloes

Shaggy polar bears munching vegetables
Black cloud hovering above polluted cities
Aluminum-rim black leather executive chairs
Nouveau-riche articulation getting into the silk and
  satin world
Ex-Catholics reentering because of the promise of the
  Mother Church
Sleepy Jews learning to play the Kabbalah puzzle
Hocus-pocus Hindus trying their best in the Armenian
  evangelical jinglebell
Tea parties' old den of Theosophy filled with chatter
  of the new Messiah
Oakwood-paneled meeting halls with deadly
  pamphlets advertising "That" or "This" trip in their
  elegant language:
This dungeon of dark tunnels where millions are
  trapped
Comparing their entrapments as better than others'.

O Dawn of Karmapa
Are you Avalokiteshvara?
If
Are
Are you
You are
So you
You must be
Come forth
The Dawn of Karmapa
The only living monarch on earth
Be kind to us
We wait for your lion's roar
Tiger's claw
Gentle smile
Ostentatious display of your presence.

You did
You will do
You are doing it
So do it
O Dawn of Karmapa.

September 9, 1974
Tail of the Tiger
Barnet, Vt.

Literal Mathematics

Zero is nothing
One is bold
Two is loneliness
Three is the other
Four is the peacemaker
Five is a group
Six is the parliament
Seven is a happy conclusion
Eight is security
Nine is trooping
Ten is convenient
Eleven is agitation
Twelve is helpless
Thirteen is a threat
Fourteen is a land speculator
Fifteen is a market researcher
Sixteen is the desperate
Seventeen is a troubleshooter for the ecologist
Eighteen is a silk merchant
Nineteen is a junior executive
Twenty is sportsmanship
Twenty-one is a Jewish banker—
But zero is one in the realm of oneness
Oneness is one in the realm of zeroness
Two is sixteen in the realm of eighteen

Twenty-one is glorious after the teething of the three
Sixteen is five nobody knows who they are
Seven is ten in the realm of coins
Nine is nineteen because of sharp corners
Three is eight you have chosen a bad tailor
Four is fourteen the grammar school is inadequate
Twenty is eighteen need for equitation lesson
Eleven is fifteen bad Christmas gift
Twelve is seventeen a carrot is not a radish
Thirteen is thirteen odd man out
Glory be to the six, good table manners.
Jam jar
Honey pot
Lemon sherbet
Who's kidding whom?
Kids are kite
Kites fly
Kids stumble
In the glorious desert mole-hole.
Life as it was.
Could life be?
I mean that way?
Do you really?
But zero is what?
Well . . . well, zero is.
Glory be to those who have missed airplane
connections—
Fly United.

September 9, 1974

One Way
Way one
Flea bite
Lion's roar

Shasta Road

Rationalists have found that there is a bird in the sky.
Experimentalists say maybe this bird is a kite.
Donkeys have their way to be stubborn.
People from a Cossack town have their particular food.
Butterflies and bats have differences in their language.
Practitioners are fascinated by their practice,
Practitioners painfully experiencing their practice
debating the reality of Timbuktu.
Million stones and trillions space are one in the area of
mutual pain.
Gooseberry and chicken feet are one in the realm of
totality.
Jungle kid and ocean crocodile are rebellious in the
realm of mutual interest.
Highfaluted holiness depressed politician burning hot
pliers
Are in the same realm as barking Pekingese at Madame
Chang's apartment.
Max King and Patricia King and Martha Washington
who knows,
Thistles poison oak grasshoppers made into juice,
Bushmen's Ph.D. Siamese cat eating frog eyes.
Prostrations are premature to give to the adolescent
student.

Pinetree Doves Coralrock Porcupine Pippi Porky
  Poodle Pissmen are in the realm of polarities.
Glory be to tonight's poet.
Who's who? What's what? Nobody knows.
But everybody knows,
Including our kind neighbor who would never harm a
  flea,
But is willing to cut your throat.

February 1, 1975

Palm Is

Palm is.
It may be small, but includes the universe:
Fortune-tellers make a living out of it;
Flamingos sleep on it;
Mothers slap their children;
It's for begging, giving;
When thinkers don't have thoughts, they rest their
  foreheads;
Trees that have palms invite holiday-makers.
Can a jackal read a palm?
Maybe S.C. can read—
But is S.C. a jackal?
S.C. is tricky,
But jackals are perky, with long throbbing howls;
Maybe they read their palms in the cold wintry night
In the aspen grove.
The Lord of Death supposedly reads palms,
To see through your life's work:
The good man
The wicked
Banker
Priest—
How many infants got slapped with a palm,
How much dough we molded with our palms,
How many directors clapped their palms on the table

Shouting, "Let's do it!"
I wonder whether Miss Bishop has used her palms in
her life?
The palms of the night,
To write poem of palm.
Flamingos
Flamingos' mothers
S.C.
Fortune-tellers.

The earth is a big palm,
So is the sky;
Jointly they make the four seasons.
By mistake, cities grow up between their palms,
A vein of highways begins to grow,
There's no room to breathe—
People call it pollution.
I wonder what it's like to be the palm of the universe.
The stars and moons,
Saturn and Jupiter,
Mars and Venus,
Twinkle between two palms.
By fault of the palms being too tight,
Sometimes various comets escape
Creating cosmic fart:
The world of fart and palms.
Good night, jackal!

February 25, 1975

Burdensome

The best minds of my generation are idiots,
They have such idiot compassion.
The world of charity is turned into chicken-foot,
The castles of diamond bought and sold for tourism—
Only, if only they . . .
Oh, forget it.
What is the use of synchronizing?
Raccoons are pure animals, they wash their food.
Beavers are clever animals, they build their dams.
Hot cross bun is for Easter.
Men who care for themselves turn into heroes
Walking on cloud—but are not dreamers—
But performing a miracle.
Distant flute makes you happy and sad—
Only for the shepherds.
Long lines of generations are hard workers.
Glory be to the blade of grass
That carries heavy frost
Turning into dewdrop.

February 25, 1975

Tsöndrü Namkha

In the land of promises
One flea bite occurred.
In the midst of continental hoo-ha
One bubble occurred in a tall lager-and-lime glass.
Midst a spacious sand dune
Sand swarmed.
Lover with sweat.
Primordial egg dropped from the sky
And hit Genghis Khan's head
In the middle of the Gobi Desert.
Horny camels huffed and puffed to the nearest water.
Desert seagulls pushing their trips to gain another
  food.
Suzanne with her jellyfish
Volleyed back and forth by badminton rackets—
Oh this desert is so dusty
One never gains an inch
Not a drip of water
So sunny
Almost thirsty
Very thirsty
Fabulously thirsty
Terribly—
Oh it's killing me
This desert this sand

Preventing me from making love
Preventing me from eating delicious supper
With all-pervasive crunch of sand.
I wish I could go to the mountains
Eat snowflakes
Feel the cool breeze—
I wouldn't mind chewing icicles
Making the delicious cracking sound
As I step on the prematurely frozen pond,
Making the satisfying sound of deep hollowness
As I step on the well-matured frozen pond,
The undoubtedly solid and secure sound
On a fully matured frozen pond.
Suzanne would love that,
Because she is the punisher in the desert
And she is the companion
When we skate across this large fully frozen pond.
Let's fly across the ice
Let's beat the drum of our hearts
Let's blow the bagpipe of our lungs
Let's jingle the bells of icicles
Let's be cool and crispy—
Suzanne, join us!
What is gained in the hot deserty wretched sweaty claustrophobic sandy skull-crunching dusty world of Gobi?
Who cares?
Come to the mountains, Suzanne,
O Suzanne!

March 1975

Pema Semma

How small can you be?
So tiny that you can't even talk or think.
How big can you be?
So big that you can't think or talk.
Desert hounds are said to be tough
But, looking at their own ancestral skulls,
They could become painfully wretched.
Come, Come, said the young woman,
Come with me to the mountains
Where the heathers, rhododendrons, tamarisks, and
snowflakes grow.
Her hair fluttered by the cool mountain air
Which is so fresh,
Her lips and eyelids quivering at the freshness she
experiences,
Sunbeam reflecting on the side of her face
Portrays a lady of life.
As she turns her head
From the little irritation of long flowing hair
She says, Mmmm.
But on the other hand she is somewhat perturbed;
Not knowing whether she is glamorous or ugly,
Begging for confirmations right and left,
Still listening to the distant flute of her past present
future.

Is she wretched?
Is she fabulous?
Thundering heartbeat in her chest,
Riding the horse of jealousy at a million miles a
  minute—
Could someone fall in love with her?
Could she be the world's monumental femininity?
Is she the possible hag
Who eats living chrysanthemums or dead bees?
Winding highway to the Continental Divide,
Snake coiling for its own purpose,
Tortoise carrying heavy-duty shell with meaningful
  walk,
Red silk rustled,
Hearty blue-blood aristocracy
With its blue ribbon blown in the wind
From the palace window—
Is this such a woman as deserves a coronation
  ceremony attended by the galaxies, the stars, and
  the world of yes and no?
Is she such a woman as is never hampered by a dirty,
  greasy bullfighter, a manslaughtering, unworthy
  man?
I wonder whether she has tasted her blood
Or her nectar.
Glory be to our Queen!
Lust is for everybody, by the gallons;
Envy is for one, who picks and chooses
Like a woodpecker digging after one worm.

However, everybody's a lover—
Let's celebrate in love!

March 7, 1975

Dying Laughing

It is ironic that the pigeon got run over by a car.
It is sad that the M.C.P. people got insulted.
What's wrong with you is that you talk too much—
Or, for that matter, think.
Yesterday was a glorious day
Today is reasonable but a bit chilly.
Boomslangs never made friends with man,
But boa constrictors swallowed a church
And assumed its shape.
Joshua Zim appreciates highlights,
Or for that matter deep throat.
Flip a coin!
Take a chance!
What is the worth of all these thoughts?
A mustache is not worth it
If there is no mustacher.
On the whole, it's a gigantic black hole
Where things come and go in and out,
Sometimes cheap sometimes extravagant.
The world is a big mind
Which reacts to all conclusions.
Scattered thoughts are the best you can do.
Let the mercury jump on a drummer's drum
Breaking and gathering—
What's wrong with you is

You think too much,
Talk;
So don't talk
Or think;
Or, not talk first,
Then don't think;
Or, don't think first,
Then talk.
But finally we find non-talker, thinker;
Non-thinker, talker.
Let's forget about it all—
OM SHANTI
Shhh
But don't . . .

Do it all anyway!
Let's do it completely!
That the whole universe could be exasperated
And die laughing!

March 7, 1975

Künga Garma

Jalapeños are good to eat
Antelope has slanted eyes
There comes a rocket
Alice is magnificent
She's courageous
Fun-fair
Jalapeños seem to be good
In the midst of your surroundings
Biting
Hot
Tongue subjugator
Throat warmer
Alligatorial bite
Crocodilean nastiness
Oh Jalapeño
Montezuma's revenge
Lips of rectum may suffer from too much jalapeño
The next day.
A peacock has feathers
A tortoise has a shell
David Rome has a mustache
Gem business
How ironical the whole thing
The Star of David shines

In the midst of Mermelstein parental warmth
Action speaks louder than word.

Jade rock resides majestically
With a silk scarf of misty cloud wrapped around its
neck,
Overhung by haunted pine trees
Pretending they are old hags
Welcoming guests who appreciate the view.
Acting as sages,
Wise frogs leap about in the atmosphere of humid
rainy misty dim stove burning with an inner glow
While the ethnic mothers cook their porridge
With rustic smile.
Turtles walk slowly but surely in the midst of dimples
of footprints
Which turn into puddles.
Tibetan sad-happy flute plays in the distance
While the roaring engines of jets resound overhead.
In the grove of maple trees
Where the bees cannot exist
Primrose, sagebrush, tamarisk hedges are growing
magnificently,
Utterly competing with arrogant pampas grass shoots.

Who cares?
How cares?—
In the midst of jalapeño dumpling
Bitten by Alice's white teeth,
Which are lubricated with feminine saliva
And gentle touch.
The swelling of her femininity,
Acting as fabulous flexible rock,
Could be swayed by wind as if a tree.

No one has seen a dancing rock,
Powerful tree,
Punctuated by occasional freckles
On her old-aged motherly face
Which still remains magnificently youthful as a
teenager.

Cuckoos and cockroaches speak different languages,
As Alice does.
Kung fu masters are subjugated by the beauty of
Holiday Inn
In its magnificent funky service.
America has grown old
But still is getting younger,
Thanks to the presidential resignation of Nixon's
scream
And hush hush that goes with it.
Another Star of David is jalapeño.
In midst of donkey's dung pussy cat is killed
Because of its Ginsberg resentment
To the Rockefellerian manipulation.
Arabs produce good coffee
With a dash of oil in it—
But nobody is comparable to the Alice in
Wonderland's jalapeño trip.
Glory be to the would-be last monarch,
Prince Charles,
Who has no idea of jalapeño
Or our Alice.

March 1975



Gyal jö (Victory Cry).

1111 Pearl Street

VICTORY CHATTER

As an old soldier watching the territory—
Flags go up and down where the soldiers gather;
Hearing distant archery contests—
Horses are unsaddled in the meadow—
Flute of a soldier who is in love;
Listening to the creacking of the cannon swayed in
 the wind.
The sound of the flute fades away;
The banner of victory is fluttered by the breeze;
Rustling of armor takes place constantly.
Occasional smell of horse dung,
Occasional cheerful chatter of the armed force—
I bide in the tent, the general,
Listening to the occasional grasshopper's leap:
How grateful to be a soldier.
Ah! storm rises,
Gold black cloud in the southern quarter—
I can hear the flag fluttered violently by the wind.
A thought occurs to me:
"Somebody's getting out of the administration."
And another:
The memory of a whistling arrow on the battlefield
And the high-pitched echo of swift swordsmanship.
A thought occurs to me:
"Somebody's getting into business,"
As the horses begin to neigh—

They are ready for tomorrow's battle:
"Somebody's going to teach philosophy tomorrow
And get out of the administration at the end of the
 week."
The cloud from the south moves close to the center
 of the sky,
Dark with wrath.
We hear resounding deep thunder.
The warriors' fight must go on—
Vigor and bravery
Sharp sword
Well-cared-for bows and rustling armor
Are our only resources.
Frontier warfare is sad and happy,
It is romantic and treacherous.
Oh! How I feel that I am a good soldier,
A good general,
Listening to the rustling of armor
Where the white tents are blown by the wind.
We are sharpening our swords and our arrowheads.
How romantic to be fighters
Conquering the American plains!
Good luck to Boulder
Rock
The Rocky Mountains
The pine trees—
Full of fantastic battlegrounds.
The kingdom rests at eleven and eleven.
It is good to fight,
It is good to know that victory is,
It is good that I alone can wage this particular warfare.
Sharpened sword
Arrowheads:
I fight in the old fashion.

July 2, 1975
Boulder, Colo.

Wait and Think

Wounded son—
How sad.
Never expected this.
Oily seagulls
Crippled jackal
Complaining flower—
Very sad.
Is it?
Is it?
Is it?
Maybe a couple of doughnuts might cure
Or, for that matter, wine that is turning into vinegar.
Little flowers
Snow drops
Early bird—
Hopefully gentle breeze will turn into hurricane.
That might be somebody's wild guess.
William Burroughs' rhetoric
Single-minded
Street dogs
Thieving dogs—
Oh how fantastic this world.
Julius Caesar never made it.
Suns and moons have their problems,
The galaxies of stars have their problems among them.

Mysterious world sad and happy:
The problem is that we are too serious.
Gurdjieffian literal thinking
Theosophical secrecy
Maroon car
Defective door
Glorious in the name of one-upmanship.

Does His Holiness sneeze?
Does His Holiness cough?
If he does,
Who doesn't?
If he doesn't,
Who does?
Truth of the matter is
We are a gigantic spider
Constantly weaving webs
But never giving birth.
Who is not brave enough to swallow the sun
Eat the earth
Bathe with the galaxies?
Let us join this feast
Free from orgy and ritual.
Hallelujah!

July 4, 1975

Missing the Point

Brain hemorrhage
Sick pigeon
Trust in the heart
Good soldier
Neat girl in the cosmic whorehouse—
Our minds becoming bigger and smaller
As if they were Lynn's mustache
Which gets bigger and smaller as he talks.
Stalagmite stalactite
Mutual love affair—
Today I rose relatively early.
My thoughts are constant
Like a leak in an old castle
Plop plop plop ploo plop.
Things go on—
Suddenly a nasty thought,
Deep sigh;
Pleasant thought,
Longing sigh.
The chatters of Hasprays continue like subconscious
  gossip.
Does mind speak?
Does mind walk?
Sometimes walk speak,
Speak walk.

Who is instigating all this?
Maybe the uranium that makes atom bombs
Shooting star
Allegorical presentation of the dharma
Historical confirmation of the
antidisestablishmentarian sophistication of the
seemingly sane society of the past.
July Fourth
Flash of fireworks—
At the same time,
Lingering thought tells me
My private secretary is really drunk.

Nitpicking
Farfetched—
This rock is problematic:
If it were arranged,
It could complain to the artist;
But since it is not,
No one to sue.
Expectation of the future is too much.
Glory be to somebody's cow dung—
It is too lucid to blame.
There goes everything
Down the drain.

July 4, 1975

RMDC, Route 1, Livermore

In the blue sky with no clouds,
The sun of unchanging mind-essence arises;
In the jungle of pine trees swayed by winds,
The birds of chattering thoughts abide;
Among the boulders of immovable dignity,
The insects of subconscious scheming roam;
In the meditation hall many practice dhyana,
Giving birth to realization free of hope and fear.
Through devotion to the only father guru
The place of dharma has been founded,
Abundant with spiritual and temporal powers:
Dead or alive, I have no regrets.

July 4, 1975
Rocky Mountain Dharma Center

Translated from the Tibetan.

གེ་སར་ལ་བསྟོད་པ།

གོ་ཁྲབ་གསེར་གྱི་རི་མོས་མཛེས་པ་དང་།
རྟ་མཆོག་ཙཧྣ་ལྷ་ཡིས་ཕྲས་པ་འདི།
དཔའ་བོ་དམག་དཔོན་ཁྲིད་ལ་གུས་པས་འབུལ།
མཐའ་ཡི་དམག་དཔུང་འཇོམས་པའི་ཕྲིན་ལས་མཛོད།
དཔའ་བོ་ཁྲིད་ཀྱི་གཟི་བརྗིད་དེ།
ཆར་སྤྲིན་དབུས་ཀྱི་གློག་ཞགས་འདྲ།
འཇིགས་བྲལ་ཁྲིད་ཀྱི་འཛུམ་མདངས་དེ།
བཙོ་ལྷའི་ཟླ་བ་ཚེས་པ་འདྲ།
ཁྲིད་ཀྱི་མཐུ་སྟོབས་ལྡོག་མེད་པ།
རྒྱ་སྟག་གཟན་ལ་ཆས་པ་འདྲ།
མང་པོའི་དཔུང་གིས་བསྐོར་བའི་དབུས།
ཁྲིད་ཉིད་གཡག་རྒོད་ངར་མ་འདྲ།
ཁྲིད་ཀྱི་དགྲ་བོར་གྱུར་པ་དེ།
རྒྱུ་སྤྲིན་ཁ་ར་ཟིན་པ་འདྲ།
པ་མེས་བརྒྱུད་པ་འཛིན་པའི་ཕྱུར།
དཔའ་བོ་ཁྲིད་ཀྱིས་སྲུང་སྐྱོབས་མཛོད།

To Gesar of Ling

Armor ornamented with gold designs,
Great horse adorned with sandalwood saddle:
These I offer you, great Warrior General—
Subjugate now the barbarian insurgents.

Your dignity, O Warrior,
Is like lightning in rain clouds.
Your smile, O Warrior,
Is like the full moon.
Your unconquerable power
Is like a tiger springing.
Surrounded by troops,
You are a wild yak.
Becoming your enemy
Is being caught by a crocodile:
O Warrior, protect me,
The ancestral heir.

July 4, 1975

Translated from the Tibetan by Chögyam Trungpa and David Rome.

Love's Fool

Love.
What is love?
What is love.
Love is a fading memory
Love is piercingly present
Love is full of charm
Love is hideously in the way
Explosion of love makes you feel ecstatic
Explosion of love makes you feel suicidal
Love brings goodliness and godliness
Love brings celestial vision
Love creates the unity of heaven and earth
Love tears apart heaven and earth.
Is love sympathy.
Is love gentleness.
Is love possessiveness.
Is love sexuality.
Is love friendship.
Who knows?
Maybe the rock knows
Sitting diligently on earth
Not flinching from cold snowstorms or baking heat.
O rock,
How much I love you:
You are the only lovable one.

Would you let me grow a little flower of love on you?
If you don't mind,
Maybe I could grow a pine tree on you.
If you are so generous,
Maybe I could build a house on you.
If you are fantastically generous,
Maybe I could eat you up,
Or move you to my landscape garden.
It is nice to be friends with a rock.

July 8, 1975

Report from Loveland

First you like your neighbor,
You have a friendly chat;
Then you are inquisitive,
You begin to compare;
After that you are disturbed
By a lack of harmony;
You hate your neighbor,
Because there are too many mosquitoes in your house.
How silly it is to have a territory in love.
The trouble with you is
That you have forgotten your husband;
The trouble with you is,
You have forgotten your wife.
"Oh this love of datura
It's killing me
But I like it
I would like to keep on with it—
One late night
Drove home
Having been loved
Oh how terrible to be at home
It's chilly
Unfriendly
Feels guilty
But angry

Household articles
Begin to talk to me
My past
My home affairs
My love affair
My wife my husband
Oh shut up!
It's none of your business
You stove
Just get out of my way
You rug
Make yourself invisible
I'm not going to tidy you people up
But
But
But
It's my home
I always want to have a home to come back to
Hell on earth
Hungry ghost
Jealous gods
Human passion
Euphoria of the gods
Stupor of the animals
I thought I was having fun
I'm so innocent
If only I could be with my lover
Nothing would matter
But
The past is haunting me
If I could live in the present
Constant fountain of romance
Nothing would matter
How foolish

How stupid—
Maybe how fantastic."

It all boils down to
Rotten fish beef stew gone bad.
Before we imitate the cuckoos or the pigeons,
We had better think twice
Or thrice.

July 8, 1975

Testimonial

When I first met you
You were a cross-eyed frog
Then you were a chicken
Puppy dog
Aluminum tea kettle
You've grown
Now you are full of jealousy
Your jealousy can drain the ocean
Your jealousy can shatter the earth
Jealousy is your food
Your success is in jealousy
Hard-core as you are
You turn deaf dumb
Aren't we all funny
Especially you
This poem was copied from a blackboard
Much love

July 10, 1975
Boulder

1018 Spruce Street (and K.A.)

So passionate
That your lips are quivering
So angry
That your blood is boiling
So stupid
That you lost track of your nose
So much so
In this world of so-so
So much
Therefore so little
So little
So great
Just so
The beauty lies in
A rose petal
Just touched by
Melting morning dew
Beauty lies in
Dragonflies
With their double wings
Buzzing neatly
As if they were stationary
Beauty lies in
Majestic shoe
That sits diligently

While the meditators
Torture themselves
In a restless shiver
So right
Norwegian girl
With her occasional professorial look
Dancing with the typewriter
Wife-ing
Just so
With her lukewarm iron
How titillating
(This ticklish world)
Just so.

If you're going to tickle me
Be gentle
Be so precise
So that
I could be amused
But
Wouldn't get hurt
By your clawing
But titillating enough
To stimulate
My system
With your feminine
Healthy shiny
Well-trimmed nail
Just so.

The trees
Grow
Just so
Baby ducks

Learn to float
Just so
Mosquitoes' beaks
Well-made
Just so
Oh you Norwegian girl
Do you know how many warts
On a toad's back?
How many wrinkles
On granddad's forehead?
How many deals
Steve Roth has made?
Nothing to worry
Everything is
Just so
Doesn't quite hurt
But sometimes
Painfully ticklish.

July 28, 1975

1135 10th Street (and G.M.)

How nice it is to meet an old friend,
How refreshing to see an old friend;
Meeting an old friend is much better than discovering
new ones—
Passing an old stone
On the winding mountain road,
Passing an old oak tree
In the English country garden,
Passing a derelict castle
On the French hillside,
Passing an old ant
On the sidewalk—
Glory be to Giovannina!
Maybe all this is a castle in the air,
Maybe this is my conceptualized preconceived
subconscious imaginary expectation,
Maybe this is just a simple blade of grass.
It is all very touching.
Maybe it is just glue,
Glorified glue
That glues heaven and earth together,
Glue that seals great cracks in the Tower of London.
However,
There is something nice about Giovannina:
When she smiles,

She cheers up the depressed pollution;
When she talks,
She proclaims the wisdom of precision.
She is somewhat small,
But dynamite.
She seems to know who she is.
She could create thunderstorm;
She could produce gentle rain.
She could get you good property;
She brings down the castle in the air.
She is somehow in my opinion well-manufactured.
Fresh air of the Alps—
I think she is fresh air,
Which turns into a well-cared-for garden
Free from lawn mowers and insecticides.

July 30, 1975

1111 Pearl Street (and D.S.)

Our anxiety,
Our case history,
Our problems with the world—
We tried so hard to accomplish,
We tried very hard.
But now we are a sitting rock in the midst of rain;
We are the broom in the closet;
We are just leaves rejected by an autumn tree.
Sometimes we think highly of ourselves—
Thundering typhoons!
Glory be to Captain Haddock,
Punished for not being crazy enough,
Sent to jail for being crazy.
Does a pitchfork have a blade?
Do the handcuffs have emotions?
Persecuted by your own guilt,
Uplifted by your chauvinism—
The whole thing is a bag full of razor blades and
 pebbles.

August 1975

78 Fifth Avenue

It was a desolate space you provided today;
It was hearty, but sadly WASP.
The subtle air of power is devastating
In the midst of the Black Velvet advertisement.
It is a rewarding experience that you are not on a
billboard,
But a breathing human being
Who produce a star on your nose as you sweat.
Our meeting was like a lady rider having a chat with a
horse in its stall
With the atmosphere of potent dung, refreshing hay,
While the neighboring horse, clad in a tartan blanket,
looked on.
This desolate concrete cemetery that you claim is your
birthplace—
I feel you deserve more than this:
Rebars and concrete facades,
Eternally farting cars spreading pollution,
Yellow cabs producing their own aggression for the
sake of money and legality—
You should be sitting on rocks
Where the heathers grow, daisies take their delight,
clovers roam around, and pine trees drop their
needles of hints.
You deserve a better world than what you have.

I would like to take you for a ride in my world,
My heroic world:
We ride in a chariot adorned with the sun, the moon
 and the four elements;
We take a great leap as we ride;
We are not timid people;
We are not trapped in our beauty or profession.
Oh you—
Your corrupted purity is still immaculate from a
 layman's point of view.
However, I am not a layman:
I am a lover.
Let us chew together a blade of chive—
You could take me out for dinner next.
Heaven forbid!
Gosh! as they say.
Suddenly I miss you.
Do you miss me?
You miss
I miss
You miss
I miss
You miss
I miss
Should you miss me?
Should I miss you?
It's all a mutual game.
If you miss me, maintain your isness.
When I see you next, I want to see you exactly the
 same as I saw you now.
But that is too foolish—
Let us come to an agareement:
If I miss you, you will be slightly different;
If you miss me, I will be slightly different.

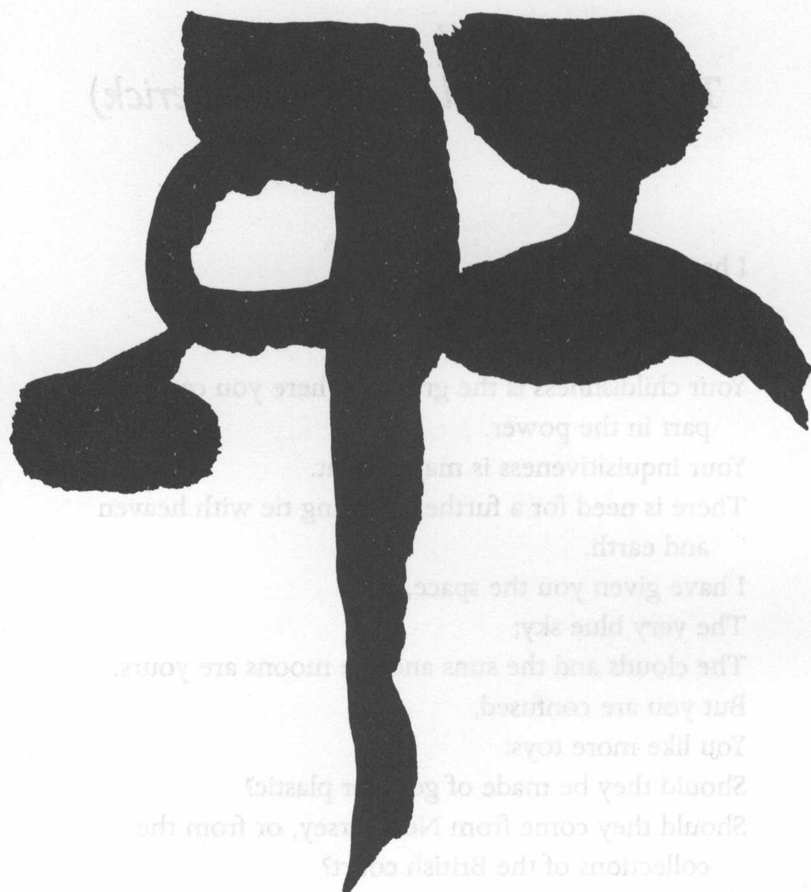
Let us meet each other in our growth and aging.
In any case, let us build the Empire State Building on
top of the Continental Divide.

March 22, 1976

The Alden (and Thomas Frederick)

I hand you my power;
If I grow you grow.

Your childishness is the ground where you can take
part in the power.
Your inquisitiveness is magnificent.
There is need for a further growing tie with heaven
and earth.
I have given you the space,
The very blue sky;
The clouds and the suns and the moons are yours.
But you are confused,
You like more toys:
Should they be made of gold, or plastic?
Should they come from New Jersey, or from the
collections of the British court?
Could you use your responsibility as a golden joke, or
a vajra scepter?
It is very heavy,
But I think you can hold it.
Canoeing is not for you.
Maybe parachuting.
Embroidering is not for you,



Shar (East).

Maybe executing.
You, my son,
Take your Swiss Army knife—
Make a samurai sword out of it.

March 22, 1976

Commentary on "The Alden (and Thomas Frederick)"

I hand you my power:

When I gave you an inch, that symbolized a mile;
I am glad you accept me and my mileage.

If I grow you grow:

If my kingdom grows, you will be hassled by it;
You will be forced to grow.

Your childishness is the ground where you can take part in the power:

Your innocence and willingness are the only working basis we have;
Therefore, I hope you will be corrupted and cynical, which is good.

Your inquisitiveness is magnificent:

You have not been embarrassed by a wooden nickel,
But you are so inquisitive about how I manage my world;
I am proud that I can push you into the world of elegance.

There is need for a further growing tie with heaven and earth:

Your smelly socks are due to having dandruff in your
hair;
Please don't regard this as problematic:
We should have head and feet together.

I have given you the space:
Since there is no choice—
Space is not mine but yours too;
But in my case, I pretended that I owned it,
And gave it to you as my hearty gift.

The very blue sky:
In the world of dharmadhatu everything is blue;
You I felt as the inheritor of our lineages.

The clouds and the suns and the moons are yours:
The organization of clouds, suns of your insight, and
moons of challenge:
To work among these three;
However, this is not passing the buck;
I regard this as passing the family heirloom—
If I may say so, you should be proud of it.

But you are confused:
Too many gifts and complimentary remarks make you
like a cross-eyed owl, or frog, for that matter;
But don't take it too seriously—
The confusion is powerfully yours.

You like more toys:
Tinkle tinkle toy world is glorious but hard-core toy
world is depressing—
They are all made out of plastic anyway;

Don't you think there's something unpleasant about
that?

Should they be made of gold, or plastic?
Should they be? .
Even though they may be made out of gold, it is
plastic—
You have better taste than that, Ösel.

*Should they come from New Jersey, or from the collections of
the British court?*
I would prefer they come from the British court,
But then you should be involved in a different court;
Maybe New Jersey is too familiar to you;
Don't be so crazy about cosmopolitanness—
They have their own rotten history.

*Could you use your responsibility as a golden joke, or a vajra
scepter?*
This is a one-sided question: obviously the vajra
scepter;
The golden joke of the other cosmopolitan trips is
pretty funky,
I hope you know that.

It is very heavy:
It is demanding;
It does not provide you with a smile, but you have to
provide it with your own smile—
But do we know what "it" is?

But I think you can hold it:
Don't have domestic orgasm but but but hold it—
Let us have cosmic orgasm with a giant splash:

Don't you think that's a good idea with a vajra scepter
in your hand?

Canoeing is not for you:
You should swim, you should do equitation, you
should do archery;
But diving together with hippy-dippy canoeing-trippy
is outdated for you,
Don't you think so?

Maybe parachuting:
Ah! There's something for you, you could do this:
Parachuting, literally or metaphorically;
I know you like the drop and I know you like the
float—
Maybe we could do them together at some point.

Embroidering is not for you:
Little stitches are very much of low vision.

Maybe executing:
You would be a great executor;
You are a great officer in executive committee:
I'm sure that is a good job for you—
You have done it already in any case.

You, my son:
Did you know your father was I?
But in any case, who can transcend the affection
beyond sonship but you?

Take your Swiss Army knife:
Made in Switzerland, all sorts of possibilities:

Goodly made, efficient, well-thought-out, everything
    you could think of,
My gift to you,
Which says T.G.S. on the handle as well.

Make a samurai sword out of it:
Be a good swordsman.

August 20, 1976
Boulder, Colo.

On the occasion of the empowerment of the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin.

Aurora 7 (#1)

Glorious year for my work.
Glorious diamond for my business.
Glorious gurus visited me.
What could go wrong, Chögyie?
Worlds of yes and no have their place in their Christian
original sin,
But my world is not that—
My world is nowness where tortoises can fly,
Birds can swim.

For the first time in my life, this is final:
It is the beginning.
I never began my life before.
I struggled with tutor, policeman,
Disciplinarians with long faces, deep frowns,
Accusing of being a naughty boy right and left.
Now the significant tutor-friend I have in this city of
Boulder
Is the sheriffdom,
Who are actually very obedient.

American democracy is falling apart.
The officialdom of democracy are embarrassed.
In the realm of ceremonies and empowerments
There is victory chatter,

There is personal pride,
There is a significant proclamation:
Chögyam was born as a peasant's kid
But he is willing to die as the universal monarch.

April 8, 1976
Boulder, Colo.

Aurora 7 (#2)

Sun is dead,
Moon is born;
Moon is dead,
Sun is born.
Who said that?
Which is true.
Sun-moon are alive,
Sun-moon are dead;
They both shine on their own schedules.
Chögyam is alive;
No hope for the death of Chögyam—
Taking care of Chögyie
With hot warm towels
Breakfast in bed
Chamber pots in their proper places
Serving Chögyie as the precious jewel who may not
  stay with us—
All take part in the platitude of serving Chögyie as a
  dying person!
Oh! What's become of Chögyie?
He drinks too much,
He's bound to die soon—
Taking care of Chögyie is no longer would-be mother's
  pleasure?
Thriving strongly,

Existing powerfully,
Eternally growing,
Stainless steel veins:
Chögyie is a crystal ball with stainless steel veins,
With diamond heart.
Even the most accomplished samurais' swords can't
cut Chögyie's veins,
Because his veins are vajra metal,
The blood is liquid ruby.
The indestructibility of Chögyie is settled—
For foes very frightening:
Downfall of him never occurs;
For friends rejoicing:
Chögyie is made out of vajra nature.
Such good Chögyie makes people shed their tears;
Such good Chögyie makes people tremble before his
vajra dignity.
Chögyie is going to be pain and pleasure for all of you,
Whether you hate or love him.
Chögyie's indestructibility could be venom as well as
longevity-nectar.
Here comes Chögyie,
Chögyie's for all,
Take Chögyie as yours—
Chögyam says: Lots of love!
I'm yours!

April 8, 1976

1111 Pearl Street

OFF BEAT

In the clear atmosphere,
A dot occurred.
Passion tinged that dot vermilion red,
Shaded with depression pink.
How beautiful to be in the realm of nonexistence:
When you dissolve, the dot dissolves;
When you open up, clear space opens.
Let us dissolve in the realm of passion,
Which is feared by the theologians and lawmakers.
Pluck, pluck, pluck, pluck the wildflower.
It is not so much of orgasm,
But it is a simple gesture,
To realize fresh mountain air that includes the
innocence of a wildflower.
Come, come, D.I.R., you could join us.
The freshness is not a threat, not a burden;
It is a most affectionate gesture—
That a city could dissolve in love of the wildness of
country flowers.
No duty, no sacrifice, no trap;
The world is full of trustworthy openness.
Let us celebrate in the cool joy
The turquoise blue

Morning dew
Sunny laughter
Humid home:
Images of love are so good and brilliant.

June 1976

Aurora 7 (and Nyingje Sheltri)

When a cold knife is planted in your heart,
What do you say to it?
When you have swallowed a cold stone,
What do you say to it?
When you have swallowed a cold icicle,
When you feel love hurts,
What do you say to it?
This kind of hurt, is it pleasurable?
Pain pleasure
Pleasure pain
Cold hurt
Hurt cold
Hurt hot
Hot hurt—
Wish I had never experienced blue sky or green grass,
Beautiful lover (would-be).
Would such hurt, gut hurt, throat hurt, brain hurt,
  lung hurt, such hurt hurt,
Bring about cosmic love affair one of these days?
Maybe the bleeding part should be served as dessert,
With occasional bubble, occasional odor
And occasional music played with it.
Such hurt love is so love love hurt.
Maybe frogs have never experienced this;
The Pekingese, the poodles are lucky
That nobody killed themselves being lovesick.

You hurt
You tingle me
You tingle hurt
Hurt tingle
Tingle hurty
Hurt tingly
Pain
Lust
Love
Passion
Red
Ruby
Blood
Ruby lust
Lust cold
Cold ruby
Frozen rose
Rose frozen
Lust passion
Cold hate
Hate ruby
Passion lust cold hate ruby
Hot ruby lust
Flute hot
Lust flute
Cold icicle
Hot ruby lust passion cold flute
Pure
Pure ruby
Pure hot cold ruby
Lust passion pure cold ruby
Cheat
Hot cheat
Cheat convert

Hot passion cheat
Cheat blood
Cheating blood
Passion ruby flute
Cold hot flute
Play
Hot play
Cheat play
Cheat play hot passion ruby
Drum
Thunder
Thunder drum
Drum thunder
Hot drum hot cheat
Hot cheat ruby drum
Drum drum drum
Cheat drum ruby
Cheat hot passion
Ruby hot piss
Flute
The flute
Throbbing flute
Throbbing heart
Cheat throbbing heart
Hot cheat throbbing passion flute
Throbbing sex
Passion ruby
Deaf
Mute
Mute passion
Deaf passion
Throbbing deaf mute passion in cold ruby liquid.

August 3, 1976

Shambhala Anthem

In the mirror created by no one
The primal white child is born,
Blowing the flute of peace and joy.
East, south, west, north, from all directions,
Storm clouds swollen with hail gather.
The thunder of no-fear resounds.
Then the warriors' red garuda arises.
The she-warriors' turquoise dragon arises.
The king's lightning-yellow tiger arises.
The queen's silver snow lion arises.
Tiger lion garuda dragon strike everywhere.
The profound and just king comes into being.
Majestic and lovely, the kingdom occurs.
Brave and stable, the general occurs.
Learned and loving, the ministers occur.
Victory, victory, all-victorious!

Arise, Lord Gesar, arouse yourself!
Appear from the unconstricted sky!
Rejuvenate the dignity of the Mukpo clan!
Victory, victory, all-victorious!

Rigden kings, arise from space!
Arouse yourselves, stand forward now
From the Kingdom of Shambhala!

Obliterate the barbarian materialists!
Victory, victory, all-victorious!

Expanding insightful confidence,
Sharpening the spearhead of intellect,
The troops of passionlessness permeate everywhere.
Since at the beginning no fear arose,
Fly the great flag of eternal no-fear!
Defeat the conspiracies of the heretics!
Victory, victory, all-victorious!

Empire extends to the limits of the sky.
Glory and wealth compete with the sun and moon.
Fame is proclaimed throughout space, like thunder—
Undefeatable the holy kingdom.
May the glory of the profound brilliant king be
 proclaimed!
May the peace and happiness of the citizens expand!
May the orchestra of virtue resound!

August 26, 1976
Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, Colo.

Pan-American Dharmadhatu III

Thick oak tree trunk
Is hard to break with two hands.
Thick oak ego
Skandha tree trunk
Is easier to break by the two hands of the vajra master.
Farmingdale
Thistledale
Heatherdale
Lovely sites beautiful to look at:
That is dharmadhatu.
Some dharmadhatus are tall and skinny,
Colored with luscious leaves;
Some dharmadhatus are fat and stocky,
Weighted with delicious fruit;
Some dharmadhatus are thorny and tough,
Dotted with bright berries;
Some dharmadhatus are bending,
Swayed by wind;
Some dharmadhatus are upright,
Growing in the midst of a giant forest.
Oh such dharmadhatu jungle—
It is beautiful.
Wandering in the dharmadhatu forest
You meet meek chipmunks
Humorous porcupines

Delicate magpies
Sneaky squirrels
Powerful tigers
Exotic jackals
Manipulative ants
Doing their own little duties right and left.
It is quite an experience to be in the midst of
  dharmadhatu jungle.
Glory be to the Forestry Department of Vajradhatu,
That such jungle has been taken care of and
  appreciated.
However, dry twigs and wounded branches need to be
  pruned,
So that we could nurse the cosmic universal pan-
  American dharmadhatu jungle.
It is nice to be a jungle man,
Tree warrior.
I send my love to the invincible perpetuating jungle of
  dharmadhatus.

October 4, 1976
Land O' Lakes, Wis.

So Bright and So Vulnerable

So bright and so vulnerable
   so sad
      so wretched
I am
   I was
      I will be
This!
   I
      with big stroke
I am
   the lord
         of the universe
For that
   I am
      so old.

October 25, 1976
Land O' Lakes, Wis.

Written on the day that Chögyam Trungpa received the Stroke of Ashe, a symbol of warriorship.

Glory Be to the Kasung

Glory be to the Kasung, he who holds the sacred
command.
Glory be to him and his troops.
Glory be to his troops of dapöns and rupöns and all
the vajra guards, the dorje kusungs.
In the realm of three mountains and one earth,
The tiger lion garuda dragon world,
Be victorious, O guardians of the Ka, the command.
May the King of Shambhala be victorious!

He who couldn't care gains victory.
He who couldn't care gains beyond bondage.
He who is beyond doubt and fear is truly profound
and brilliant.
He who no longer needs reference point is just and
powerful.
He who is unconcerned about gain and loss is truly all-
victorious.

At the time this poem was composed, "Kasung" was the title of the Kasung Kyi Khyap, and "dorje kusung" referred to all members of what is now known as the Dorje Kasung.

Profound brilliant just powerful victorious—
Be to you as the Vajra Kasung.

November 8, 1976
King's Gate
Land O'Lakes, Wis.

Tibetan Lyrics

Like a hunting dog, my friend,
You are always hungry, hoping for me.
The weather is good today:
Vanish to the distant jungle.

Yesterday I did not offer you tea,
Today I ask you not to be angry;
Tomorrow, if the weather is good,
Together we will go to battle.

This black stallion of mine:
If you ride it to the plain, it is like the shadow of a bird;
If you ride it to the mountain, it is like a flame;
If you ride it to the water, it is like a fish;
If you ride it to the sky, it is like a white cloud.
When ornamented with a saddle, it is like a king
  setting out to battle.
This is an excellent great horse—
Out of delight and respect, I offer it to you.

1976

Asleep and Awake

While the grass was falling asleep
Waiting for the snowflakes,
Timid world has been reshaped into warrior world:
My accomplishment is achieved.
Abundance of sympathy, devotion, kindness,
  politeness—
All amount to asleep and awake.
When dying culture is reintroduced,
It becomes genuinely powerful.

February 11, 1977

Conspicuous Gallantry

Like gold dust sprinkled on white paper,
You see man's nectar sprinkled on the Great Eastern
Sun paper.
Sometimes people have twitches that pull the corner
of their mouth or a part of their nostril—
These are the signs of confusion.
The genuine piece of gold is saying nothing.
The genuine piece of Rigden's truth is being eloquent.
Swimming in the tiger lion garuda dragon ocean is
magnificently messy,
Because you are trying to mingle orange white blue
red colors into one spectrum.
But out of that, giant monster known as benevolent
dictator
Spotted with six white dots.
The universe is for all:
Capitalism, democracy, giant red ant,
Neurotic Irish setter, well-fed English mastiff,
Kind frog, deliberate spider, meaningful wasp,
Tickling girlfriend, dashing ministers, juniper-like
cooks.
Do you see, Goofy?
Fast and slow, nooky dooky, old tree, old fruit
Run wild in the midst of puffy duffy outrageousness—

All amount to the razor blade, the black dot frog
spawn razor blade,
The self-suicidal self-sharpening self-tantalizing great
blade
Which dulls nothing but itself, but sharpens
nevertheless.
Good Ashe, finest point of the finest of all,
Cutting its own space for its own accommodation.
Creation of the kingdom is not from giving further
babies,
But cutting its own way by the razor blade of the
Rigden's Ashe,
In the same manner as Dawa Sangpo did.
Tiger creates its own blade, very sharp, when tiger is
drunk in meekness;
Lion creates its sharp razor blade when it is perky;
Garuda creates its sharp razor blade when it is
outrageous;
Dragon creates its sharp razor blade when it is
inscrutable.
The method is to sharpen from dull to invisible,
Like the royal ax of the emperor,
Whose blade is invisible but whose weight is heavy-
duty—
It will slice without pain,
But come down with utter meaningful weight.
Sun rose from the East,
The Great Eastern Sun arose,
Cutting through with razor knife tripe and beans.
Flag flutters beyond heroism.
Human beings' sense of humor is superseded.

Warfare doesn't exist.
Everybody wears a uniform in the heat of the green
field.

April 1977
Charlemont, Mass.

This poem was composed during a year of retreat in Charlemont, Massachusetts. During this period, many Shambhala forms were created, including flags and banners, medallions, uniforms, and songs.

Great Eastern Daughterlet

When I discovered her,
She was one,
And when I searched for her,
She was ten;
When I sent for her,
She was fifteen;
When I invited her,
She was nineteen;
When I discovered her unicorn's horn,
She was twenty-five;
When I taught her the English language,
She was fifty;
When I taught her how to walk,
She was seventy;
When I told her that she is the daughter of Shambhala,
She was one hundred and two;
So much for her age.
She still remains nineteen years old—
Princess who possesses the delightful white face of the
highland moose.

June 3, 1977
Ingonish, Nova Scotia

Whycocomagh?

Sometimes there are trees;
Sometimes there are rocks;
However, occasionally there are lakes;
Always, to be sure, there are houses;
To be sure certain there are views of a certain
  gentleman being crucified.
Nevertheless, the deep-fried food is very decent,
So good that one almost forgets bourgeois cuisine.

The coastal sky seems to frown at us
With its benevolent threat;
We receive plentiful rain.
In green valley pastures brown cows graze.
Tibetan-tea-like rough rivers carry the highland soil.
Occasional mist and fog bring wondrous possibilities.
Naive hitchhikers laugh and scrutinize our convoy.
The highlands are beautiful, free from pollution,
The lowlands regular, telling the whole truth:
There is nothing to hide.
Harmonious province hangs together,
But for occasional economic panic.
Men of Shambhala would feel comfortable and
  confident in the province of no big deal,
Flying the banner of St. Andrew adorned with the lion
  of Scotland, red and yellow.

We find it beyond conflict to fly the banner of the
Great Eastern Sun.
It is curious to see their flags strung on yellow cords;
Nice to watch the children cycling in the ditch;
Nice to discover all the waiters serving on their first
day;
Nice to see that nobody is apologetic;
Good to see alders taking root after the forest fire of
pines.

June 1977
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

Lion's Roar

Genuine people bring genuine intellect,
Genuine mind brings genuine discipline,
Genuine teacher and student bring true wisdom;
Naropa the great siddha brought the spotless discipline
of the practice lineage.
Theory is empty head without brains,
Chatting logicians are the parrot flock,
Clever psychologists swallow their own tongues,
Chic artists manufacture garbage collages—
At this illustrious Institute we are free from confusion.
Let us celebrate in the name of sanity,
Let us proclaim the true discipline,
Let us rejoice:
The eternally rising sun is ever-present.
In the name of the lineage, I rejoice.

August 17, 1977

Composed for the first graduation ceremony of Naropa Institute.

Halifax

Big roll by the thunder,
Big speech by the lion,
Lovely maple trees making their statements:
I love this world,
I hate this world,
Too demanding,
Too kind,
Basically not giving any reference point.
Roar like a rock mountain,
Laugh like a giant waterfall,
Cry like a peacock's mate—
Who is kidding who?
Success is in the palm of your hand,
Doubt is missing a flea on your hips.
Be gentle and kind,
Don't give an inch,
Your inscrutability is mine—
Let us meet together in Cape Breton.

October 19, 1977
Charlemont, Mass.

Latest Early Conclusion

When a dragon sits on the throne,
It coils and smiles, it thunders.
When a snow lion sits on the throne,
It smiles, growls, and rejoices.
When a tiger sits on the throne,
It licks itself and purrs its own sevenfold patterns,
  being feline.
When a garuda sits on the throne, it becomes a giant;
It puffs and sharpens its beak and claws, and shrills.

We have nothing to say about all this.
But we might have something else to say.
When you reign, when you preside,
You can't run the organization.
Whoopy swoopy goody is not necessarily making love.
On the other hand, toughy gruffy gronk out might be
  the way.
Seemingly we missed our chance in all this.
We have accomplished lots.
Smile without smiler is questionable;
Pisser without pee is embarrassment.
How you proclaim has to do with your own
  impatience and abrupt grudge.

You didn't preside, you led—
Leading and presiding are entirely different.

I am encouraged that you didn't try to preside;
Instead, you tried to lead our people.
Whether that was intentional or accidental,
It was a flying bird shitting on the right stone.
Whereas if you try to preside, you will experience the
    cosmos short-circuiting on you.
The tiger lion garuda dragon forces will tear you apart.

If we are going to invite the tiger into our system,
We have to be tiger-like, with feline snideness.
If we are going to invite the dragon,
We have to have reptilian immediateness.
If we are going to invite garuda-like confidence,
We have to have avian touch and go
So that we accomplish everything without committing
    ourselves.
If we are going to achieve the canine expression of the
    lion,
We have to be fearless, without expecting
    compliments in return.

Giant
Small
Speak
Cautious
Stinky
Ambidextrous
Mutual inadequacy—
All are bound together in how to rule,
How to preside,
How to organize.
Take your choice—which is your fault or your virtue?
Let us not pounce.
Let us not leap.

Let us bound—in accordance with the Great Eastern
Sun.
No blame no praise
But at the same time—lots of liabilities.
It is heavy-duty:
You cannot get rid of it.

Autumn 1977
Charlemont, Mass.

Timely Rain

In the jungles of flaming ego,
May there be cool iceberg of bodhichitta.

On the racetrack of bureaucracy,
May there be the walk of the elephant.

May the sumptuous castle of arrogance
Be destroyed by vajra confidence.

In the garden of gentle sanity,
May you be bombarded by coconuts of wakefulness.

October 20, 1977

Pan-Dharmadollar

Looking for cheaper restaurants,
Paying for expensive ties,
Are dualistic as much as Muhammad and the
  mountain.
Would the mountain come to Muhammad
Or Muhammad go to the mountain?
Sadat and Begin made a pact,
But who is going to achieve peace?
Vision and dollar are in conflict:
When there are lots of dollars,
There is no vision;
When there are no dollars,
There is lots of vision.
Clearly stranded,
Goodly rich,
Goodly poor,
Can't afford to pay for one's own tuxedo,
Can pay for one's luxury in the realm of
  buddhadharma,
Elegant waltz participation,
Contradiction after contradiction.
Why is a parrot green,
Speaking human language?
Why is the monkey ambidextrous,
Mocking humans?

Why do Americans mock the vajra kingdom?
They don't mean to,
They are merely being casual because they have no
money,
Or they have too much money;
Therefore, they can come up with cheap proposals.
Will this go down in our history?
No.
The Noh play says:
Worshiping every deity is trusting in ancestral heritage.

For the cosmopolitan communication of dharma,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the hermit who is in the cave in order to
perpetuate the practice,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the scholars who are translating buddhadharma
into Americanism,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the householder yogis who could practice tantra
with indestructible conviction,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the freelancers who might give up their ego trips,
To accommodate and lure them into the dharma
world,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the young maidens who fall in love with the
dharmic man,
To create a truly genuine dharmic world,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the warriors who fight for the sake of Shambhala
kingdom,
Who never leave their prajna swords behind,
Let us have lots of ratna.

For the administrator who never breathes for his own sake,
But is purely concerned about the facts and figures and morality of our organization of the vajra mandala,
Let us have lots of ratna.
For the vajra master who couldn't exist without the vajra world, dedicating his life and yet receiving longevity nectar from others,
Let us have lots of ratna.
Money peeps,
Money tweaks,
However, money has never roared.
Lion's roar could be money.
Pay!
Due!
Accelerate!
Save!
Complain!
Bargain!
Let us save money by spending,
Let us spend by saving:
Sane money is free from dualistic territory.
For the Great Eastern Sun, frigid money is no good.
Computerized this and that is a kid playing cowboys and Indians:
Let us relax and be taut in our money world.
May there be Sukhavati of dollars.
May there be Shambhala kingdom with lots of wealth—
But wealth comes from waltz,
Waltz comes from dignity,
Dignity comes from consideration,
Consideration comes from being sane.
Let us spend,

Let us save:
The Great Eastern Sun saves and radiates.
Good for you—
Jolly good show to everyone—
Let us be genuine.

December 3, 1977

Meetings with Remarkable People

Banana aluminum,
Wretched secondhand pressure cooker,
Crucifixions made out of plastic,
Jumbo jet,
Iron grid that is fit for cooking but not for eating, with
  a permanent garlic stain,
Rooster with its feathers and flashy crest and waddles
  of elegant pink flashy brocade—
Sometimes we wonder whether we should be one of
  those,
Or else should completely fake the whole thing.
The gentleman with slim mustache and notepad under
  his arm
Told us that we shouldn't fake anything,
Otherwise we are going to run into trouble with BDS
  as well as IRS.
The gentleman with belly button, weighing 300
  pounds,
Told us that if we're going to fake anything,
We had better cut our aortas first.
A lady too told us the same thing;
She was wearing a tigerskin skirt,
She had a giant smile but one tooth,
She had turquoise hair but elegant gaze
From her single eye,

She was drooping,
She seemed to be wearing some kind of lipstick and
powder makeup,
Her earlobes were big,
She was wearing giant gold earrings—
She told us they were 24 carat
And she complained that they were sometimes too
heavy on her head;
She also told us that her hair was unmanageable,
That her neck muscles have too much blood power;
However, she stood there telling us all those things.
She brought along a companion of hers,
A lovely maiden wearing a necklace of pearl,
Smiling, with a light complexion,
Riding on a white lion.
Then she brought a third friend who was very peculiar:
One wonders whether he was a man or woman,
human or animal;
He had a most gaping mouth opening at his stomach,
With somewhat polite gaze;
He possessed nine heads,
All of them expressing certain expressions
And wearing conch-shell rings in their earlobes;
When you look at him, his faces have the same
expressions,
But with seeming distortion in every face of delight.
Can you imagine seeing such people and receiving and
talking to them?
Ordinarily, if you told such stories to anybody, they
would think you were a nut case;
But, in this case, I have to insist that I am not a nut case:
I witnessed these extraordinary three friends in the
flesh.
Surprisingly, they all spoke English;

They had no problem in communicating in the midst
of American surroundings.
I am perfectly certain that they are capable of turning
off the light or turning on the television.
What do you say about this whole thing?
Don't you think meeting such sweet friends is
worthwhile and rewarding?
Moreover, they promise me that they will protect me
all along.
Don't you think they are sweet?
And I believe them, that they can protect me.
I would say meeting them is meeting with remarkable
men and women:
Let us believe that such things do exist.

December 8, 1977

International Affairs

THE COSMIC JOKE OF 1977

In this godforsaken place so-called planet Earth,
Rainstorms thundershowers snowfreeze floods and
typhoons constantly occur.
Somewhere there is good harvest, somewhere there is
famine,
Shortage of something-or-other,
Aberfan chaos,
Liverpool dock strike,
Sheffield problem with the stainless steel workers.
Jesuits in China were kicked out by the Communists.
Catholics do hard work in Thailand, but the Buddhist
school system makes it ineffective.
Sri Lanka is having a paranoia with the Sacred Heart
people.
Mr. Park experiences slap on the face from trying to
buy the U.S. senators.
Indira Gandhi is fading in Desai's pollution with
bhajans of Gandhi supplication.
Sadat is trying to trick the world but stepping on the
dogshit of Arab manure.
Madame Mao with her coyote true-believing hunting
expedition has been caught by the suburbian Hua.
Deng Xiaoping is resurrected like the Christ and
planning capitalized Communism.

Moscow proclaims its steady Kremlin victory, which
was won sixty years ago.
Brezhnev half-dead thinking that he is a good
huntsman and the greatest general in the world,
Choking with Stalinist nostalgia,
Nixon dead corpse has made American statesman into
Carter embarrassment;
Maybe George Washington did lie occasionally.
Human rights program is not all that religious, since
nobody in the world believes in true-believing
anymore.
Jimmy cardigan approach does not work in conflict
with Congress's suit and tie.
Trudeau trumpet did not provide fanfare for the
Quebecois because one note was missing—
The French homemade folk song.
Hong Kong cannot be repossessed because the Chinese
fear unity between U.S. and U.K.
Japan cannot make Australasia connections because
they felt a bad slap after the Second World War;
Sony and Mitsubishi might save their own lives, but
they are doubtfully courageous.
German boldness is hooha, yet good living in the
Deutschland provides a reason to be against the
North Sea oil of the U.K.
France like a drunken sheep perpetually propagates
François;
Giscard posing with his daughter for a campaign
portrait worked, but dining with citizens seemed to
end quite abruptly.
MIG Mirage Phantom and the vertical takeoff of the
English do not work in the sale of arms because
Arabs have lopsided the purchase.
Maybe King Hussein is the shrewdest customer for all
these things;

But since Hussein is questionably sane or not, no
doubt the Russians will do double takes on all this.
Burma's Ne Win feels that he is able to contain the
Buddhists while courting socialism by being polite
to the Chinese.
The Cambodian Prince is whispering about his royal
position in the country, while his activities are
proscribed by the party of the delirious generals and
the circumcised party members.
Madame Mao had a slight problem, to say the least,
when she tried to ban classical Chinese opera.
Rhodesians try to compensate by being good and bad
at the same time, with seeming kind hatred to their
natives.
South Africa is cooped up with a big gun and no one
to shoot except the wall where the gun is;
Black majority means that soul food might be tastier
than roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.
Britain experiences cosmic shock with the problem of
existence and nonexistence—
The only saving grace is Her Majesty the Queen in
marketing her underpants,
Which might work for a while, but still is questionable:
Will Charles be referred to as Chuck?
Kingdom of Spain:
Carlos has his own tortilla—to make his mind up
about jumping to the conclusion of the
Communists;
It is uncertain whether he is the tortilla or the leftists
are his tortilla—
Being too good does not help;
Generalissimo has no doubt appeared to Carlos many
times in vision after his death.
Mongolians in Ulan Bator have felt that as long as they
kept with the Russians they were safe,

But their nerve center has begun to leak to the Chinese
People's Republic;
It would be much better for them to milk horses as
they have done:
Good cheese might come out of that.

And what about the United Nations?
We begin to feel the United Nations is not even a great
apple strudel.
The United Nations is shortcake;
It is well-cooked seafood without wasabi.
The United Nations is a well-brewed nonexistent
alcohol that nobody will drink.
However, union of nations might provide some hope
and fear so that we could actually respect it as more
than a buffer,
As Baha'ullah would say.
The United Nations seems to be a garbage chute;
The United Nations is a dilettante true believer in the
world's unity;
The United Nations is a giant building in New York
City, but nobody knows what's happening inside;
On the whole we could say the United Nations is
pampas grass that grows around a Japanese garden.
There is no reason to criticize, because the United
Nation's doesn't provoke any bravery;
The United Nations is a gentleman's underpants:
nobody dares to criticize or cultivate;
The United Nations is good theory but not good
practice;
The United Nations provides good school, but naughty
children can throw ink blops at the teacher while
having no basic unity.
Jimmy Carter gave a splendid talk at the United
Nations;

Khrushchev pounded his shoe on the desk;
Idi Amin vomited his rhetoric at the General
   Assembly;
The Pope sanctified the United Nations, telling them
   that peace and godliness are the only way;
The Dalai Lama was rejected by the United Nations.
Flying the colors of all the countries, the United
   Nations looks heroic and beautiful,
But its own blue and white feels gray and beige.
Receiving the complaints of all countries, the United
   Nations becomes a polite wasteland.
Since the absence of U Thant the United Nations is a
   fish-and-chip shop where all nations are expected to
   add sugar instead of vinegar.

In this case, the world is ending—
What shall we do about it?
Let us bring the Great Eastern Sun, with or without
   the United Nations.
Let us have champagne breakfasts celebrating the
   rising sun.
Hail to the Union of Nations!
Hail to the Union of Nations!
Hail to the Union of Nations!

December 1977
Charlemont, Mass.

One Sound

One sound
Thousand ripples—
Taizan jumps in the sand.

December 1977

Dixville Notch

PURRINGTON HOUSE (AND C.F.)

A glowing worm is said to be brilliant,
But the brilliant sun is more convincing;
Sweet smile seems to be the best,
But genuine affection is more convincing.
When I was riding with you
On that winding road of our mutual snow mountain,
You said, "Oops!"
I said, "What?"
Nonetheless we are both fascinated and intrigued by
our mutual trip,
Fueled by immense passion and a glowing sense of
humor.
We might find snowdrops somewhere:
You said you didn't like the melting snow,
You said you liked the fresh snow—
I was intrigued by the way your constructive mind
worked.
While gazing at an icicle,
At first a little one on its way, melting,
You then discovered that little one becoming bigger:
Such rediscovery of the phenomenal world and
appreciation of detail—
Indra and Brahma and Avalokiteshvara

Would have found this appreciation so sweet and
glowing.

When we met,
You were merely there;
When we talked,
You were tongue-tied.
And again when we met,
You were more than there;
When we talked,
You were very articulate.
Our mutual guess became like the dance of the
dragonfly:
You guessed,
I guessed;
Did anybody guess?
Did anyone guess?
Sometimes one wonders whether we should give away
this mutual secret to anybody.

Spring gives way to summer
And summer gives way to autumn;
Autumn gives way to winter:
Then we are back to square one,
Watching icicles again.

When you are attacked by this and that,
You should hold the needle of nowness
Threaded with our mutual passion.
When you are hungry and fearful of the small big
world,
You should look at the Great Eastern Sun
With the eye of our mutual passion.
When you are lonely,

You should beat the drum of sanity
With the stick of our mutual passion.
When you feel awkward,
You should drink the sake of confidence
With the lips of our mutual passion.
When you feel you are nobody,
You should hold the falcon of great humor
With the hand of our mutual passion.
When you feel spoiled,
You should fly the banner of genuineness
With the wind of our mutual passion.

You should have no problem in propagating our
mutual passion—
As long as, or as short as,
A journey's been made
In the name of the biggest or the smallest,
Which transcends eruption of stomach.
Peacock magpie wolf
Rattlesnakes equipped with antennae
Jackal polar bear shaggy dog
Taj Mahal
Good wasabi
Chicken feet
Rothman's Special—
All of these, wicked and workable, are our world.
Including all those there is no problem,
Whether the so-called phenomenal world is sweet or
sour, painful or pleasurable.
We should make sure that we do not put them in the
oven
And make a convenient loaf of bread of them.
Let us not regard the world as one,
Or, for that matter, let us not regard the world as
multiple.

As long as we dance and sing, sweep the floor, wash
the dirty dishes,
And celebrate in the name of satin silk diamond ruby
emerald and pearls,
Fresh water clinking with ice,
We are producing rich cold powerful ideal world,
With a touch of warmness:
Let us project to this universe our mutual passion.

If I may go further:
We are not deaf, not dumb,
We are not mute.
We are the world's best possible goodness—
Outspoken, exaggerated, understated fanfare,
With the goodness of goodness.
The wicked will tremble and the good will celebrate:
Impossibility is accomplished in the realm of
possibility—
Fathomless space being measured,
Depth of passion being explored.
Let us eat snail adorned with fortune cookies;
Let us drink amrita fizzed with our mutual humor.
Let us ride the horse of delightful disestablished world,
Saddled with our mutual passion.

Did you know the sun rises in the east?
Don't believe those who tell you that the sun rises in
the west.
Shall we have our mutual celebration?
One who fights is eternally poor;
One who shares is victorious:
Let us celebrate in our mutual passion.

March 21, 1978

Afterthought

Such a precious human body,
Difficult to rediscover;
Such precious pain,
Not difficult to discover;
Such an old story
Is by now a familiar joke.
You and I know the facts and the case history;
We have a mutual understanding of each other
Which has never been sold or bought by anyone.
Our mutual understanding keeps the thread of sanity.
Sometimes the thread is electrified,
Sometimes it is smeared with honey and butter;
Nevertheless, we have no regrets.
Since I am here,
Seemingly you are here too.
Let us practice!
Sitting is a jewel that ornaments our precious life.

March 21, 1978

Anniversary

You have performed goodness and genuineness.
You have lived up to the standard of genuine son.
Your chuckle has turned out to be great humor.
Your bravery is better than garuda's cry.
I appreciate your being as a real person.
As much as we celebrate,
You should join the tiger lion garuda dragon dignities.
Your icicle is good and your fire is magnificent.
Your meaningful smiles have turned out to be chariots
Which will bring along the Great Eastern Sun.

March 22, 1978
Dixville Notch, N.H.

Written at Seminary to celebrate Sawang Ösel Mukpo's coming of age.

Don't Confuse This for Trick-or-Treat

Those who sit
Shouldn't be cowards,
Those who sit
Shouldn't be tricky,
Those who sit
Shouldn't be resourceful,
Those who sit
Should be basic people
Who sit—
But no tricks of
Tricky
Fuzzy
Jumpy
Creepy
Thinking
Funny:
Sitters in the buddhadharma world
Should be decent.

I met a sitter who said
She could build the Buddhist version of Disneyland—
If we would permit her not to sit for at least forty-five
  minutes.

I met a sitter who said,
"I could ape like a monkey, growl like a tiger;

I could huff and puff and get lots of money for
  Vajradhatu—
If you would permit me not to sit for at least forty-five
  minutes."

I met a sitter who shrieked like a loon,
Who said,
"I don't like what's going on. I never did.
Either I have room to fix things up or I'll quit.
In any case, *I* want to be acknowledged—
If you would permit me not to sit for at least forty-five
  minutes."

I met a sitter who is a foogy-doogy owl,
Who said,
"Come to think of it,
I don't like the administration because they make me
  sit.
On the whole, I prefer not to be manipulated by the
  establishment.
I feel fooled and conned, wretched and abused.
I prefer not to see the daylight—
If only you would permit me not to sit for at least
  forty-five minutes."

I met a sitter who has developed a snout like a jackal,
Who said,
"I would like to collect the crumbs;
I would like to explore them,
So that I could feel whether the vajrayana makes sense.
These crumbs of hinayana and mahayana are
  worthwhile.
I prefer to regurgitate, and I would be delighted to eat
  up my own vomit,

And quite possibly I could take it home in lunch-packs
And have a good holiday—
If only you would permit me not to sit for at least
forty-five minutes."

I met a sitter who is a prairie dog,
Who said,
"This Madhyamaka logic and Buddhist reasoning is
like eating ants as opposed to collecting nuts.
I don't like theory anyway;
I would like to have nutshells—
If only you would permit me not to sit for at least
forty-five minutes."

I met a sitter who is an oily cat,
Who said,
"This Vajra Politics is for the stupid seagulls.
I would prefer to meow rather than fly and caw.
I feel threatened by being fed.
I prefer to do my own hunting:
You can swallow a few poisons here and there in
hunting—
If only you would permit me not to sit for at least
forty-five minutes."

Many people scheme,
Trying to occupy,
Trying to use logical mind.
But when you sit,
These schemes begin to turn into cow's dung,
Which might have good manure possibilities.
Other than that,
We find nobody has developed the lucky strike.
We have to keep on sitting,

All the time.
Sit all the time.
Day time.
Night time.
Early.
Late.
In the midst of your dream.
Who could care less that you're sitting so much?
Somebody might be thankful that you're sitting so
much.
Sunrise.
Sunset.
Good days.
Bad days.
Making a mockery of your self-indulgence and
ingenuity.
Good manipulation
Good reestablishment
Of your missing the point in the midst of your own
yawn.
Fundamentally there are no sympathizers who will
accept your lucky wormstrike:
Lucky cozychickengooddumplinghoneylakeincredibly
goodmassagegoodbreakgoodbreathingspaceallare
yourtricksanyway.
Nobody gets anybody.
Good wasabi.

We pre-smart you before you outsmart us.
Everybody knows what you're trying to get at.
All the tricks are predictably silly.
So let us celebrate in our silly tricks—
Hallelujah!

Corny tricks and trips are bad noodles.
Try better next time,
If you can at all.

March 22, 1978
Vajradhatu Seminary
Dixville Notch, N.H.

Eternal Guest

In the jungle of passion,
The warrior of the tiger roams;
In the flame of aggression,
The diamond vajra sparks;
In the ocean of ignorance,
The iceberg of cold awake rumbles.
Bounded by love
Swallows still try to measure the sky;
Nursed with the nectar of amrita,
Still we look for a nanny goat's nipples—
Such as we are:
But we do not give up.

We should not give up:
We are the children of the vajra world.
We should sing the anthem of lion's roar;
We should cry the shriek of fearlessness.
Come and join us!
Let us be wakeful for our own sake;
Let us be decent for others' sake.
My love to you.

April 6, 1978

Swallowing the Sun and Moon without Leaving the World in Darkness

GOOD LADY OF WISDOM

Crooks have their way of handling their world;
Honest ones will stitch and sew timidly.
Crooks have a way to proclaim their victory;
But the honest stumble, bump, and stutter.
Crooks have their way to dress in nouveau-riche
  fashion;
But the honest wash, clean, and press.
Crooks have their way to kick, knock, run;
The honest will take a taxicab.
The crooks will assume, expect, and consume;
The honest will speak softly with timid smiles.
The crooks are usually dirty, oiled with their own
  sweat;
The honest are clean, well groomed—at least free of
  dandruff.
We have a lot of reference points here—
However, I would suggest you swallow the sun and
  moon simultaneously.
That does not mean you are a crook,
But an honest man not wasting time.

Since we met, I have been trying to make you an
honest person.
You had your little ways;
Your being honest is wicked.
Sometimes I wonder who taught you that:
Maybe your Canadian honest crooks,
Or your crooked honest Canadians.
However, someone talked you into being a timid
person.
Some quarters of theism would say:
If you are a person of proclamation in early life, it is
bad;
You should not take anything, even if it is given to you;
You should say thank you for everything, even if it is
yours;
You should learn to say no thank you if things are not
yours;
You are supposed to watch your P's and Q's if things
are uncertain.
In short, you should not hurt a flea;
If a flea is your neighbor, turn the other cheek.
Nevertheless, if there is a big disagreement,
You should not hesitate to cut his throat
And disbelievers in Christendom are animals—
You might as well make good Yorkshire pudding out
of them.

However, when your shoe walks without you
And your hat floats without you,
You wonder who's in them.
I think you should be startled,
You have a perfect right to be startled.
We're not joking, are we?
Of course not.

Buddha died in bed;
Christ died on the cross;
However, you might die in bed on a cross.
We shouldn't be too concerned with little details like
that.
Let's turn the whiskers of cat,
Polish the nails of poodle.
Let's not tiptoe, anyhow.
Take a big chunk out of my life;
Make a good cake out of it.
Let us roll in a king-size snowbed,
Let us sniff Mitsuko,
Let us pluck hair off the tiger's back,
Let us eat sausage of Brahman bull,
Let us catch the sun with a net,
Let us catch the moon with bait,
Let us not tiptoe.
Since your world is mine,
There is no problem with polite society—
As long as you don't perform the mudra of chicken,
As long as you don't proclaim like a duck,
As long as you don't float like a baby baboon.
Let us proclaim the lion's roar,
Let us fly like a seagull.
Let us shriek like an eagle:
Which reassures us that there is no maggot in our
brains.
Let us proclaim in the name of delight and love and
fearlessness.
We could eat our eggs and bacon happily ever after.

April 17, 1978

Saddharma Punsters

In the primordial world there is no language;
There is no need for translation.
In the manifested world there is the language of
onomatopoeia.
In the fully evolved world we have languages of direct
expression.
So we stumble, in this way:
The translator says, "What do you mean by ocean?"
The interpreter says, "I mean ocean."
The translator says, "What do you mean by ocean?"
The interpreter says, "I mean ocean,
Such as Mediterranean, Pacific, Atlantic, Indian,
Antarctic—
On the whole I mean oceanic."
Then the translator says, "What do you mean by
oceanic?"
The interpreter says, "I mean oceanlike."
And the translator says, "What do you mean by
oceanlike?"
The interpreter says, "I mean salty, waves, divides
continents, ships can sail through."
Then Robin Kornman says, "What do you mean by:
Ships can sail through?"
The interpreter says, "Ships are miniature islands
where people can stay, and they commute from one

continent to another continent so that dry goods
can be delivered."

Then Larry Mermelstein says, "What do you mean by
dry goods?"

The interpreter says, "Dry goods means that they are
dry because they are carried from mainland to
mainland in ships without being spoiled by the
water."

Lodrö Dorje says, "Ah, that makes sense!"

David Rome says, "There is a grammatical error in this
language. Why do we have to say: Mainland to
mainland? Since they have to travel by water, they
are bound to get wet somewhat. Therefore we
might say: From off the mainland on to the
mainland. On the whole, if the water is wet, why
do we bother to say wet as opposed to water? But
on the other hand if water means wet, why do we
say water instead of saying wet? Why don't we use
one language? Either we should decide to say wet
or water."

So the translators go on and the interpreters expound
their thing

And one of these days, who's kidding who—

Whether skull means head or head means skull;

And we have confusion about why jackal is coyote or
coyote is jackal;

And we have further problems: why worm is snake,
and so forth.

Until the philosophy is carried out between translators
and interpreters,

We will have to talk about why blue is not black,

Why a round earth,

Why the solar system.

So we end up agreeing with each other,

And the final agreement and conclusion between
translators and interpreters is that the truth of
suffering and the truth of prajna have no synonyms.
Let us be that way;
Let us understand those two,
So we can translate happily with the interpreter,
So we can interpret happily with the translator.
Iris is blue.
Blood is red.
Bone is white.
Marrow is gray.
When we look at the first sun we squint our eyes.
When we touch our finger to fire we go Ouch.
When we pee in the toilet, we assume a serious face.
When we wipe our bottoms, we assume a pragmatic
look.
Let us translate that way;
Let us continue that way,
With or without Kornman Mermelstein Dorje Rome,
Happily ever after or sadly.
Let us translate fully.
The truth is:
When you say mind,
The translation is mind,
The interpretation is mind.
Good luck!

April 30, 1978

Falling in Love with a Pair of Handcuffs

Looking at the distant notch,
One begins to feel there is a mist of pain and pleasure;
Reading the pages of the pages of Tintin and Asterix,
One begins to feel there are endless scapegoats.
Let down by the weather,
Cheered up by a sunny breakfast,
One begins to feel you are the most wretched
As well as the most well-favored person.
Reading the bubbles in the glass of your Perrier water;
Experiencing sweet-and-sour affirmation
In discussing between the delicacies of frogs' legs and
   Yorkshire pudding—
Somebody says, It is falling in love with a pair of
   handcuffs.
Someone says, It is joining heaven and earth.
In any case, the Dixville Notch has given us enough
   excruciating pain,
As well as splendid pleasure.
As we watch the chipmunks go up and down,
Sometimes we wish that they could come down the
   way they went up.
Watching constant snowflakes floating among the
   trees
Adorned with their lichens,
Which are so brightly deep green and beautiful beige,

Brocaded with subtle grayness—
Has the world ever seen this?
Possibly not.
Except us
As we float in the yellow and gray room watching the
ceiling
And discussing whether there is a tinge of pink in it.
Agitation,
Unfriendliness,
Are based on smelling each other's bodies
Where our eyelids quiver.
Subconscious gossip trying to label who's kidding who,
Distant plans,
Short confrontations,
Are all bounded in failing the examination.
The target and success tend to bring us an attack of
sickness.
The threat of hara-kiri,
The accentuated unknown fear,
Brought us closer, ever loving.
While the stomach rumbles,
While the ice crackles,
Sometimes we don't pay attention to our mutual
humor.
But on the other hand this snowdrop.
This muddy wet world.
Save us from too much tripping out in the world of
buddhadharma,
Whether we pass our exams or not.
Ironically our mutual world is adorned with mutual
delight,
Which does not particularly belong to either of us.
Since we realize that there is no alternative
We end up celebrating every minute,

Which is not your fault or mine.
Let us have three cheers for the owl and the cockroach
And the trustworthy nappy which keeps our outfit
  clean.

Kalapa Camp: Purrington House
Dixville Notch, N.H.
April 30, 1978

I Miss You So Much

I miss the Regent
And that transforms into clarity,
The luminosity which perpetually lights itself:
No need for switch or kindling wood.
I miss my son
And that transforms into energy,
Unyielding energy and play
Which can perform the cosmic dance.
I miss my queen
And that transforms into the power of speech,
Utterance of genuineness and nowness
Which cuts thoughts and proclaims the vision of
  indestructibility.
I miss the princess consort
And that transforms into passion;
Every moment becomes coemergent twist—
It is beyond coming or going.
The pain of the delight
Lights up the universe.
Choicelessly I remain as flaming vajra.

July 3, 1978



Tro (Happiness).

The Doha of Confidence

SAD SONG OF THE FOUR REMEMBRANCES

As I look constantly to the Great Eastern Sun,
Remembering the only father guru,
Overwhelming devotion blazes like a bonfire—
I, Chökyi Gyatso, remain alone.

Having been abandoned by my heart friends,
Though my feverish mind feels great longing,
It is joyful that I am sustained by this great confidence
Of the only father guru and the Great Eastern Sun.

Having seen the beauty of a mist covering the
  mountain,
The pines moving gently in the wind,
The firm power of rock-hard earth,
I am constantly reminded of the splendor and beauty
Of the only father guru and the Great Eastern Sun.

Wildflowers extend everywhere
On mountain meadows filled with the sweet smell of
  fragrant herbs.
Seeing the gentle deer frolicking from place to place,
I constantly remember the compassion and gentleness
Of the only father guru and the Great Eastern Sun.

Fighting enemies in the chasm of love and hate,
Having sharpened the weapon's point of joy and
  sorrow, hope and fear,
Seeing again and again these cowardly hordes,
I take refuge in the sole confidence
Of the only father guru and the Great Eastern Sun.

Fatherless, always dwelling in foreign lands,
Motherless, not hearing the speech of my own
  country,
Friendless, tears not quenching my thirst,
Remembering the warriors of the father and mother
  lineages,
I live alone in the sole blessing
Of the only father guru and the Great Eastern Sun.

July 25, 1978

Bon Voyage

Bon Voyage.
You go away.
You go away with doves and rhododendrons.
You fade away in the memory that is part of the blue
sky.
You will be forgotten with ashes of burning cigarettes,
As if fossils never formed in the prehistoric age.
Happy birthday to you.
You fade away in my life.

November 27, 1978

Memorial in Verse

This year of building the kingdom:
Dealing with the four seasons,
Studying how millet grows,
And how the birds form their eggs;
Interested in how Tampax are made,
And how furniture can be gold-leafed;
Studying the construction of my palace—
How the whitewash of the plain wood can be
dignified,
How we could develop terry cloth on our floor,
How my dapöns can shoot accurately,
How my financiers can rush themselves into neurosis,
How the cabinet session can arrive at pragmatic
decisions.
Oh, I have watched the sky grow old
And the trees become younger as the seasons changed.
I have experienced the crisp air of December and
January becoming a landmark of my life
As twenty gray hairs grow on my head.
I have witnessed that I have grown older and old,
As I grasp the scepters and handle the rice heaps,
Performing ceremonies.
I have thought I have also grown younger every day,
Taking showers, looking at myself in the mirror—
Perky and willing, I see myself:

That my lips don't quiver, my jaws are strong,
My gaze is accurate.
When I think of this year,
The most memorable occasion was the explosion of
love affair,
Which was no joke.
It is true, I think of that every day
When I take my Aldactone and my Reserpine for my
good health,
As prescribed by the physicians.
I think of my love affair as I wipe my bottom
Sitting on the toilet—
One appreciates that yellow dye sitting on white paper
As it flushes down the efficient American plumbing
system.
One of this year's highlights is also that I failed and
accomplished a lot:
The failure is mine, the accomplishment is to my
Regent.
Sometimes I think of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, or
the Yellow River;
I could have shed many tears.
And I think of the glaciers of Mt. Everest;
I could become solid, steady, and stern.
I have developed the face of a frozen glacier.
So my life comes and goes,
The same way the swallows sway back and forth in
the air.
They may catch flies or they may not.
I have developed the jurisdiction and fair constitution
of the Kingdom of Shambhala.
I have told the truth of the Great Eastern Sun vision
from my moldy lips.
I have experienced certainty within uncertainty,

Because one realizes the traffic of ants does not have
traffic lights
And it is hard to give them speeding tickets.
My journey grows and shrinks as the Vajracharya and
the Sakyong,
The first of the Kingdom of Shambhala's history.
However, the wicked will tremble and the awakened
will rejoice.
I have fought, ambushed, raped, attacked, nursed,
abused, cultivated, fed, nourished, hospitalized my
world
With its worldees.
Now I have grown very young and very old.
I appreciate the sun and moon, snow and rain, clouds
and deep blue sky;
I appreciate the ruggedness and the beauty of the
universe,
Which is sometimes cruel, developing sharp thorns of
cactus,
And sometimes produces chrysanthemums of fantastic
scent.
Blood or ink: both I take as yellow and purple color.

January 1, 1979
Boulder, Colo.

To My Son

Be fearless and consume the ocean.
Take a sword and slay neurosis.
Climb the mountains of dignity and subjugate
    arrogance.
Look up and down and be decent.
When you learn to cry and laugh at the same time,
    with a gentle heart,
All my belongings are yours,
Including your father.
Happy birthday.

January 19, 1979

For Anne Waldman

When your blood boils,
Relax with the wind;
The wind always blows.
Play with a blade of grass;
The truth will always be told.

March 7, 1979

As Long as the Sky Is Blue

TO ALLEN GINSBERG

As long as the sky is blue and the sun shines
We tell the truth
To some it might be mockery
To some it might be joyful.

March 7, 1979
Dorje Dzong

Putting Up with the Trans-Canada

The yearning Lake of Louise is imprisoned by her own
 ice;
The proud ranges of the Rockies are undermined by
 the bad weather;
An occasional avalanche protests from the glaciers.
But I am impressed that there is no outrage or
 complaint.
The trees and moss become very polite
And you can hear them talking to each other in hush
 hush, saying,
"Don't interrupt the mountains or the lake."
However, holiday-makers of the winter and the spring
 couldn't care less
About such diplomacy taking place between the
 mountains and the trees.
Japanese come a long way from Japan
And the locals intrude their weekends,
Taking advantage of the highway belt that cuts
 through the mountains,
Roaring with their motorized vehicles.
But the Canadian Rockies and the Canadian lakes are
 so naive and stupid.

Supposing they heard the boom of prajna—
The Rockies might dissolve into sand dunes.
Let us not take a chance.
But, on the other hand, it is very tempting.

May 24, 1979
Lake Louise, Alberta
Canada

Buddhism in the Canadian Rockies

With the walk of an elephant, the peacock's dance
occurred;
With the gait of a jackal, the snake coils;
With the bark of a dog, a fleabite occurred.
Seeing the flower in the sky,
Experiencing blue sky,
We are never intimidated by the world of yes and no.
Tangerines are said to be good to eat,
Kumquats are cute;
However, we drink nectar without salt or sugar.
Go away, children of mud, disperse.
Don't look upon me as your playmate;
I have no desire to have a mud bath.
Roaring lion on the mountains
Parrots talking double language
Rhododendrons blooming too early because the
season is unreliable—
The range of Himalayan mountains can dissolve with
the vajrayana magic;
All the oceans in the universe can dry up hearing the
fantastic vajrayana proclamation.
Children, children, don't be afraid;
Come along and join us:
As has been said, "Gathering nuts in May."
We will celebrate and cherish our heritage.

Infants that do not need bottles or nappies,
We go along to the archery range
To see the whistling arrows that sometimes hit and sometimes miss the target.
The impossibility of the possible can be achieved
At the archery ground of the playground.
Thick and gray clouds of rain and storm,
Desolate mountains which roar with avalanches—
Solitary hotel stands in the midst of nowhere,
Swarmed with holiday-makers with their multicolored outfits and seeming limps,
Armed with cameras, uniformed with sunshades,
Complaining, "Where is the Lake Louise?"—
Much to their own surprise,
Since they couldn't find delight anywhere, let alone in the Chateau or the Lake.
Canadian Rockies, extraordinary and blunt,
Decorated with snowcaps and mist,
Proclaiming their dubious status range after range,
As if there were many weddings, but the couples never ate the cake;
As if there were many birthday celebrations, but the party is never finished.
Ironic sensationalism of the Canadian Rockies,
Young and blunt, treacherous but keen:
Shaggy reindeer descending along with mountain goats,
Feasting themselves on the garbage of the towns of Field or Banff—
As long as they are protected by the so-called national parksmanship, they are not hunted,
But at the same time they display subhuman immigrant greasy hair and tarred hooves.
Sun and moon shone simultaneously in the Canadian Rockies,

But I never saw them cheering up;
In fact, they usually cry along with the mist and clouds,
Wiping their tears with the local dust.
Somebody planted toothpick trees:
They grew and got older, decorated with little thorns
  and cones,
Inviting the holiday-makers,
Putting up with broken bottles and empty cans,
As if they were Boy Scouts who had lost their
  breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
How splendid the Canadian Rockies—godless, without
  worshipers.
One wonders how we found ourselves in these
  Canadian Rockies,
Practicing meditation according to the example of
  Milarepa and our lineage.
We were able to get into the cracks in the skeleton of
  the CP administration;
They invited us because they had neither teeth nor
  veins to spare for themselves,
Thinking we might provide guts and fat and flesh for
  them.
How amazing that we could accommodate the
  vajrayana world in the midst of this agitated
  poverty and business world.
Usually the merchants have no teeth, but they have
  very sharp gums;
They have no nails, but a tight grip.
Aren't we too brave? Sometimes I wonder.
Aren't we too cowardly? Sometimes I wonder.
Between the warrior and the coward, we find our path,
As lilies and frogs who never quarreled.
I take pride in the six smiles of the tiger
In this cuckooless world of North American
  atmosphere.

Spring never comes here, but autumn might be good;
In spite of the summer, we still take pleasure in the
  overwhelming winter:
It is a good time to practice.

May 24, 1979

Praise to the Lady of the Big Heart

FOR LILA RICH

Immeasurable space with primordial smile
Manifesting delight and beauty:
I appreciate your painful pleasure,
Our mutual humor, mutual passion, mutual goodness,
Together we ride the windhorse
With your elegant laughter echoing in all directions,
Even in the midst of a nightmare.
Your companionship, your genuine look, cause us to
  share our burdens together.
The great lady of the court, tireless, limitless—
I love your big heart.
I will be with you in life or death,
Along with your husband.
Cheerful birthday!

August 21, 1979

Not Deceiving the Earth (and M.S.N.)

In protecting the earth, we found good pine needles
and harsh dried wood along with rocks helpful.
When you begin to examine our earth,
You find tiny mushrooms and small grass blades,
Ornamented by the chatter of ground squirrels.
You find our soil is soft and rocky;
It does not permit artificial soil topping.
Our pine trees are diligent, dedicated, and graceful;
In either life or death they will always perform their
duty of pinetreeness,
Equipped with sap and bark.
We find our world of wilderness so refreshing.
Along with summer's drum, we produce occasional
thundershowers, wet and dry messages:
We can't miss the point,
Since this earth is so bending and open to us, along
with the rocks,
We are not shy,
We are so proud—
We can make a wound in a pine tree and it bleeds sap,
and courts us, in spite of the setting-sun shadow;
They bend and serve so graciously, whether dead or
alive.
We love our pines and rocks;

They are not covered with the superstitious setting-
sun chemical manure of this and that.
We are so proud of the sky that we produce on our
horizon.
Our stars twinkle and wink as if they know us;
We have no problem of recognition.
Our rocks and pine trees speak for us.
I love this soil—dusty, sandy, good, and free from
astroturf:
Good earth, good grass, good pine tree, good
Newton—
So good.
We love them all.
With them, we could bring about the Great Eastern
Sun vision.

August 27, 1979
Rocky Mountain Dharma Center

Maestoso Drala

When we met, I felt that you were the essence of lha.
You frighten me.
If you are the agent of the lha,
Have I been corrupted too much to ride on you?
Am I worthy?
Have I been spoiled and corrupted by drinking Coca-Cola?

You accepted me so kindly,
Therefore I named you Drala.
You have the muscles of Vajrapani,
You have the neck of a true Mukpo,
You don't walk, but you dance.
You are not my dream, you are reality—which frightens me.
You are capable of projecting the true windhorse—
Maybe I have forgotten how to ride windhorse truly.
You are kind and gentle, with extraordinary gait.
Your steps can't be measured by the horses of Magyel Pomra.

When we held the big race in order to gain the throne of Gesar of Ling—
Do you remember?—you were there as the steed of Gyatsa.

When we swam across the river of Ma in a suit of
armor,
Many comrades were killed but you were fearless;
As we forded the river—do you remember?—you
came out pink
Because of your whiteness and the enemy's blood in
the water.
And you proclaimed yourself with three neighs of Ki
Ki So So as a warrior horse.

When we defeated the hordes of Hor—do you
remember?—you were there.
As we marched into the city of the antidharmic world,
Your gait was magnificent:
But you were so energized by the clinking of our suit
of armor to kill the basic rudra,
We had to slow you down,
So that we could enter into the city in a threatening
and dignified way.
When we teamed together in the cavalry,
You were there as Yuja, destroying the swiftness of the
barbarians;
I remember very clearly how your white coat was
stained by the blood of the enemy
As we slashed their bodies, separating the limbs from
the torso.
We rode together and looted the enemy's camp
And you were heightened with the smell of the blood
that stained the sword of your rider;
You went after the enemy and we had to restrain you,
Because killing too many enemy is bad taste:
We have to conquer rather than kill them;
But your gait was wonderful, maintaining your
terrifying *passage*.

White as you are—we fought many times,
With your help overcoming the barbarian insurgents.

I welcome you back to my world,
European as you are, known as Maestoso bloodline:
I never betrayed you as the strength of Mukpo.
I have no doubt that you will not have any difficulty
in relating with the fluttering of our victory banner
and listening to our anthem,
And I am sure you will remember the trooping of the
colors of our Kasung.
As you are known as Drala, maintain your arrogance.
I love you.
Be my companion, at war or in peace.

November 18, 1979
Boulder, Colo.

For the Shambhala Lodge after their gift of the white Lipizzaner Maestoso Drala.

Trooping the Color

Hold the rein of meagerness.
Ride on the saddle of forward vision.
Control the horse of uncertainty.
Make your decision with a good seat.
Our government will proceed like good cavalry.
As you ride watch out for the mole holes,
So that none of the riders fall off this victorious horse.
In short, ride the horse with profound frown and
smile.
Do not forget that you have a bow on your right and
a quiver on your left.
Fight this world of setting sun with a joyous war cry.

1979(?)

Drunken Elephant

Drunken elephant—
Catching mirage by net;
In the mirror of my mind I comb my hair
With the brush of samsaric absurdity.

1979

Limp and Talk

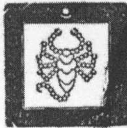
FOR RONALD STUBBERT

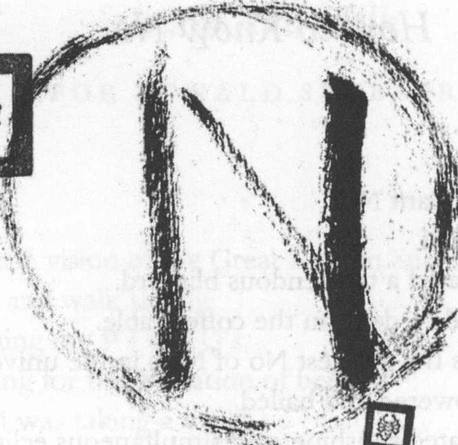
With the vision of the Great Eastern Sun
I limp and walk slowly,
Watching my P's and Q's,
Working for the liberation of beings.
Once I was taking a walk;
I stumbled over something
And I discovered you—
We became good friends.
Thank you for your loyalty and understanding:
I wish you a hearty happy birthday.

1979

How to Know No

There was a giant No.
That No rained.
That No created a tremendous blizzard.
That No made a dent on the coffee table.
That No was the greatest No of No's in the universe.
That No showered and hailed.
That No created sunshine, and simultaneous eclipse of
   the sun and moon.
That No was a lady's legs with nicely heeled shoes.
That No is the best No of all.
When a gentleman smiles, a good man,
That No is the beauty of his hips.
When you watch the gait of youths as they walk with
   alternating cheek rhythm,
When you watch their behinds,
That No is fantastic thighs, not fat or thin but taut in
   their strength,
Lovable or leaveable.
That No is shoulders that turn in or expand the chest,
   sad or happy,
Without giving in to a deep sigh.
That No is No of all No's.
Relaxation or restraint is in question.
Nobody knows that big No,







If you know "Not "and have discipline,
Then the ultimate "No" is attained,
Patience will arise along with exertion,
And you are victorious over the maras of the setting sun.

But we alone know that No.
This No is in the big sky, painted with sumi ink
eternally.
This big No is tattooed on our genitals.
This big No is not purely freckles or birthmark,
But this big No is real big No.
Sky is blue,
Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
And therefore this big No is No.
Let us celebrate having that monumental No.
The monolithic No stands up and pierces heaven;
Therefore, monolithic No also spreads vast as the
ocean.
Let us have great sunshine with this No No.
Let us have full moon with this No No.
Let us have cosmic No.
The cockroaches carry little No No's,
As well as giant elephants in African jungles—
Copulating No No and waltzing No No.
Guinea pig No No.
We find all the information and instructions when a
mosquito buzzes.
We find some kind of No No.
Let our No No be the greatest motto:
No No for the king;
No No for the prime minister;
No No for the worms of our subjects.
Let us celebrate that our constipated dogs can relieve
themselves freely in the name of No No.
Let us have No No so that Presbyterian preachers can
have speech impediments in proclaiming No No.
Let our horses neigh No No.

Let the vajra sangha fart No No—
Giant No No that made a great imprint on the coffee
table.

January 1, 1980
The Kalapa Court
Boulder, Colo.

International Affairs of 1979

UNEVENTFUL BUT ENERGY-CONSUMING

Maybe Julius Caesar was right,
Organizing straight Roman roads throughout Europe.
Had the nose of Cleopatra been a different shape,
History might have changed.

This year is quite uneventful,
Regurgitating over and over that the nations have no
chance to chew and eat a good meal.
The success of Joe Clark is replacement,
Adopting dog instead of cat as house pet in the
Canadian Parliament.
Farewell to Pierre Trudeau;
His invitation to visit Tibet was comparable to the
second visit of Nixon to China.
The pontiff's messages and declarations of goodwill
are like having a pancake:
We know syrup will come along.
It is time for the Christians to unite:
Maybe the clean-shaven Catholics could join with the
bearded Eastern church.
Margaret Thatcher's prime ministership was
frightening,
But turns out to be not so feisty.

We are reassured that she decided to wear a skirt as
opposed to trousers—
What a relief.
Tories always tame ladies,
And the Liberals and Labor party wish they had a she-
leader who could wear riding breeches.
However, England will be always England:
When she is sad, she becomes tough;
When she is tough, she becomes soft.
Good old glory is fading,
And now they refer to the kingdom as ruled by
Britannia, as opposed to Elizabeth the Second.
We are sad at the death of Uncle Dicky;
He was such a good person, but he had to pay his
karmic debt:
Instead of being killed on board the ship *Kelly,*
He was destroyed on a fishing boat—
May he be reborn as a Shambhalian warrior.
Vietnam invasion of Cambodia,
China invasion of Vietnam:
All of those jokes are comparable to a group of lizards
biting each others' tails.
Where is the spirit of communism?
Marx, Engels, Lenin—
If they returned and saw what a mess they made in the
universe, they would be horrified.
We find nobody is practicing true communism.
The Chinese declaration of religious freedom in Tibet
is humorous:
You are free not to practice religion,
And the Panchen Lama beckons the Dalai Lama.
Opening the door of Sino-Tibetan tourism fooled the
sharpest and most professional journalists;
They lost their critical intelligence.

Islamic tradition is fantastic:
"Killing enemy, develop wealth in the name of Allah."
The grand Ayatollah declares spiritual principles in the
name of hate,
Recapturing the example of *Jaws*.
Sino-American declaration is sweet and sour,
Missing the Hunan beef of Mao Tse-tung,
Both parties not knowing how to handle their power;
Taiwan takes secret delight that it does not have to
maintain international law and order.
Korea lost its leader,
Park killed in a parking lot by his own security guards;
Unifying South and North Chao Xian to make Korea
out of Korea is questionable.

In short, the nations are capitalizing on what they
were;
In turn they lose what they are.
This year is not an exciting year at all,
In spite of short dramas and quick exchanges.
There could be an exciting perspective to it:
Declaration of war between Islam and the rest of the
faiths.
The Shah as *le chat* got out of the bag,
Terrified, frustrated—we feel sorry for the Empress
Farah.
We realize that the United Nations is a rib cage
without heartbeat or lungs,
Trying to do its best.
In spite of China being chairman of the Security
Council,
Nothing gets done.
We are sad;
It is hopeless.

We are happy;
We could contribute.
The state of affairs of the world is somewhat better
    than a male dog pissing on an appropriate bush.

January 1, 1980

To the Noble Sangha

With your doubt, laziness, hesitation, and
inquisitiveness,
We have found magnificent soil in which to sow the
seed of the buddhadharma.
With your friendliness, sense of humor, and
willingness to work with me,
We are able to harvest our crop.
Your sympathy and genuineness led me to believe that
true dharma can be established in North America.
The ten years of my existence here have been long and
treacherous;
Yet it is short—as if it happened yesterday.
I appreciate you all:
Without your exertion and delight I would have
passed away long ago.
That is your best birthday present:
That you will practice with me.

February 9, 1980
Denver, Colo.

A countertoast at a celebration of the author's birthday.

Auspicious Coincidence

WEALTH AND VISION

The tiger has developed more stripes.
The lion has developed more mane.
Could the garuda fly further!
Is it possible that the dragon could resound deeper!
Could my ten years of being here be more!
Sometimes I feel I have been in North America 10,000
 years;
Other times, maybe only ten seconds—
We grow young and old simultaneously.

We certainly appreciate what we have done,
What we have achieved, in ten kalpas to ten seconds.
It is wondrous,
Shocking,
That you as the noble sangha
And I as the Vajra Master—
We grew old together.
Such a wonderful dharmic world would be impossible
If we never met each other.

We could say that the wise and the wicked have no
 time to rest.
Let us not indulge each other

In the ground, path, and fruition of our journey.
Let us wake and join in the celebration,
And let us go further without rest.

In the name of the lineage and our forefathers,
Let us hitch up our chuba fearlessly;
Let us bring about the dawn of tantra
Along with the Great Eastern Sun.

February 24, 1980
Lake Louise, Alberta

Fishing Wisely

From the samsaric ocean,
With the net of your good posture,
The fish of your subconscious gossip
Are exposed to the fresh air.
No praise, no blame.
The fish of your subconscious mind
Look for samsaric air,
But they die in coemergent wisdom.

February 25, 1980

Good Morning within the Good Morning

Because of my forefathers,
Because of my discipline,
Because my court, the tutors and the disciplinarians,
have been so tough with me,
I feel enormous gratitude to them:
They taught me the Shambhala vision.
Instead of sucking one's thumb,
You taught us to raise head and shoulders.
With sudden unexpected eruption,
I have been blown into the cold land of a foreign
country.
With your vision, I still perpetuate the discipline you
taught to me.
With second occasion of the Shambhala Training of
Five,
I would like to raise a further banner for the students
and their practice:
May we not suck our habitual thumbs,
May we raise the greatest banner of the Great Eastern
Sun.
Whether tradition or tales of the tiger,
We never give up our basic genuine concern for the
world.

Let there be light of the Great Eastern Sun
To wake up the setting sun indulgence.
Let there be Great Eastern Sun in order to realize
Eternally there is always good morning.

March 30, 1980
Boston, Mass.

On the occasion of teaching Shambhala Training Level Five.

Haiku 2

Claws of the lovely child,
Beauteous smile of the magnificent woman—
Both are eating raven's shit,
Experiencing the taste of the one flavor.
Walking with deer foot,
Trotting like a horse,
Biting like a butterfly—
Aren't we all fooled by the universe?
Catching the rain of blood,
Appreciating the dew drops of winter and spring—
Aren't we all appreciative, enjoying the great bliss?
The mirage of antelopes caught in the trap of
religion,
The fish of discursive thoughts caught by the net
without hooks and worms—
Aren't we joyful that we catch samsara without
aggression or militaryhood?
Our generals are very kind,
Our military strategy is very kind,
We never shoot anybody but we capture them—
Our only concern is, can we feed them all?

In this glorious catch and kill,
Cure or kill,

I would like to dedicate my experience of being in
Chateau Lake Louise to Lady Jane,
Who is the best of the pigeons of the peacocks,
The best of the jackals of the snow lions,
The best of the lizards of the turquoise dragons,
The best of the ducklings of garudas.

All goes well.
Ki Ki—all goes worthywhile—so so!
I take pride in our expedition.
Since my mother left me without her fur chuba
I decided always to be chubaless,
A warrior without wearing clothes, walking in the
cold.
My mother and my guru have agreed on this
principle,
So now I am furless, clotheless.
On the other hand I remained king,
Sitting on a throne with a self-snug smile.
If I never had heritage,
This never would have happened:
Thanks to Gesar
And anybody related to the Mukpo family
Who has had the delicious meal of the Mongolian
meat eaters.
Good dish,
Solid gold brocade,
Genuine suit of armor,
Riding on a white horse into battle—
We take pride in all of those.
Ki Ki So So!
Ki Ki So So to Lady Jane!
Ki Ki So So to my white horse!

Ki Ki So So that we are the warriors without ego!
Om svabhava-shuddhah sarva-dharmah svabhava-
shuddho ham
Ki Ki So So!

April 25, 1980
Lake Louise, Alberta
Canada

Miscellaneous Doha

Unborn rock
Petrified sky
Crippled windhorse
Mute skull
Blue red—
If you cannot sort them out,
Don't cut your tongue on the razor smeared with
honey:
Rejoice in dancing on a needle.

April 28, 1980

Exposé

ACKNOWLEDGING ACCUSATIONS IN THE NAME OF DEVOTION

Remember, O Tusum Khyenpa!
Remember, O Father Karma Pakshi!
Remember, O Tilopa!
Remember, O Naropa!
Remember, O Milarepa!
Remember, O Marpa Lotsawa!
When I remember your kindness and your power,
I am left in the midst of the dark-age dungeon.
When I taste your great bliss,
It is as if for the first time—
As if no one had tasted honey before.
When I realize your devotion,
It makes me so lonely.
When I see and experience anything good and
  wonderful,
It reminds me of the Kagyü wisdom and what you
  have sacrificed for us.
When I put on good clothing or see an attractive
  maiden,
When I handle gold or diamond,
I feel great pain and love for your wisdom and
  exertion.

I can only cry,
Your beauty and exertion and footprints make me so
sad and full of longing—
Because we are left behind, nowhere,
Unable even to see your footprints in the dust.
How could you do such a thing?
Any mark of elegance or imprint of goodness;
For that matter, anything wicked and raw, confused or
destructive;
Anything we see makes us feel so sad.
We will cry after the Father Kagyü,
Whether we are attacked or praised,
We do not follow the conventional pattern of hope
and fear;
Nonetheless, you left us alone.
We feel so sad and lonely,
We want to taste you, smell you—
Where are you?
We cry and we would like to threaten you and say:
Show us your true face, to help us never give up;
In this very bed, on this very cushion, in this very
room—
If you don't show us your face and tell us,
We will perish in tears and dissolve in misery.
Please come and be with us.
At least look at us the way we are,
Which may not be the best you expect of us;
But we have the greatest devotion,
Beyond your preconceptions.
We will cry and shed our tears until our eyeballs drop
in the sand dune
And we drown in the ocean of our tears.
O Knower of the Three Times, omniscient,
We have tried and practiced after your example:

Please don't give up.
When we iron our clothes, it is for you.
When we shine our shoes, it is for you.
When we wear jewelry, it is for you.
We do everything because of you;
We have no personal concern.
If we do not realize your dignity and wisdom,
May we rot and dissolve into dust.
We do everything for your sake and because of you.
We are so sad because of you,
We are so joyful because of you.
Father, if you have strength, this is the time to
manifest.
I am about to die
And be reborn in crying and laughing at the same time.
Father, please have consideration for us.
We do not do anything for our own sake.
We do everything for the sake of devotion to you.

April 30, 1980

Mixed Grill Dharma Served with Burgundy of Ground Mahamudra 1980 Vintage

THE ELEGANT FEAST OF TIMELESS ACCURACY

Blond cactus thorn with occasional freckles,
Albino chimpanzees with oy vey mantra,
Rock or diamond,
Shoes or socks,
Food or excrement—
These dichotomies dissolve and pop up.
As you teach vajrayana to the Americans,
Sometimes they reduce into tadpoles;
Other times they expand into crocodiles that you find
in South America.
Inconceivable mind finds a way around, and very
direct, to hug them and puncture them.
Pollution is not a question.
Build a magnificent granite castle;
Build a magnificent Aberdeen granite castle on the tip
of your own tongue.
Buy the Windsor castle, brick by brick,
As the ticks of your watch move, second by second,
Black-blue dial on your wrist.
Shave the mustache of King George
By explaining to him the scientific discoveries of poison
oak.

Round needle of Rahula can create eclipse of sun and
moon simultaneously.
Provide prana dot by putting together mixing and
melting.
Bind the world with a single strand of horsehair from
Maestoso Drala.
Make the universe murky white
And feed the six realms with honey and milk through
the straws of porcupines' quills.
Act unreasonable,
As if tigers from Bengal are in debt at the House of
Pancakes.
The Catholics' cherubs supposedly transcend their
nappies;
However, they are eating too many grapes provided
by the Italian Communist party chief to the Vatican
City.
Some day we hope the haggis will walk.
One day the potatoes will play their harps in the name
of the glories of Ireland.
Too much has been said here.
I hope this achieves the result of too little being said
here.
After all, splinter is not harpoon;
Elegant burp is not resounding fart.
I hope this world will live up to what it proclaims;
Otherwise, we have a shattering surprise:
Sooner or later we end up picking up the small pieces.
With tremendous yearning toward sea urchins' eggs,
I congratulate this world made out of this and that,
that and this.
It is very impressive that everyone knows the morning
sun will set in the evening and there will be another
sun shining the next day.

I find people are so smart—they can talk about
tomorrow and plan ahead.
How clever they are—assuming they know there is a
next day.
Such brilliant and noble naiveté is good.
It seems that people know, if there is light, there will
be dark:
I am utterly amazed at their insight.
Glory be to the mosquitoes;
Glory be to the thorny rose.
Fire can burn;
Water can quench thirst.
Amazingly, it seems that this universe works.
So fortunate.
Past present future in us may teach us the true dharma,
Without a sneeze or too many hiccups.
May the wheel of dharma revolve eternally in the
name of the Great Eastern Sun.

May 4, 1980

Growing Pains Are Over

FOR DAVID ROME

Once you were a wounded warrior:
Now you have developed fearlessness, you can play
with the sword blade.
Once you were a coward and wouldn't talk to
strangers;
Now you have learned to declare the command of the
Great Eastern Sun.
Once you were miserly:
Now you can spend great energy, free from taking
breaks.
We appreciate you—
Please accept this bow, representing upaya;
Please take this arrow, representing prajna.
We wish that you may continuously protect the
command
And generate the wisdom of the Rigden fathers.
Cheerful birthday!

June 17, 1980

Coming of Age of My Son

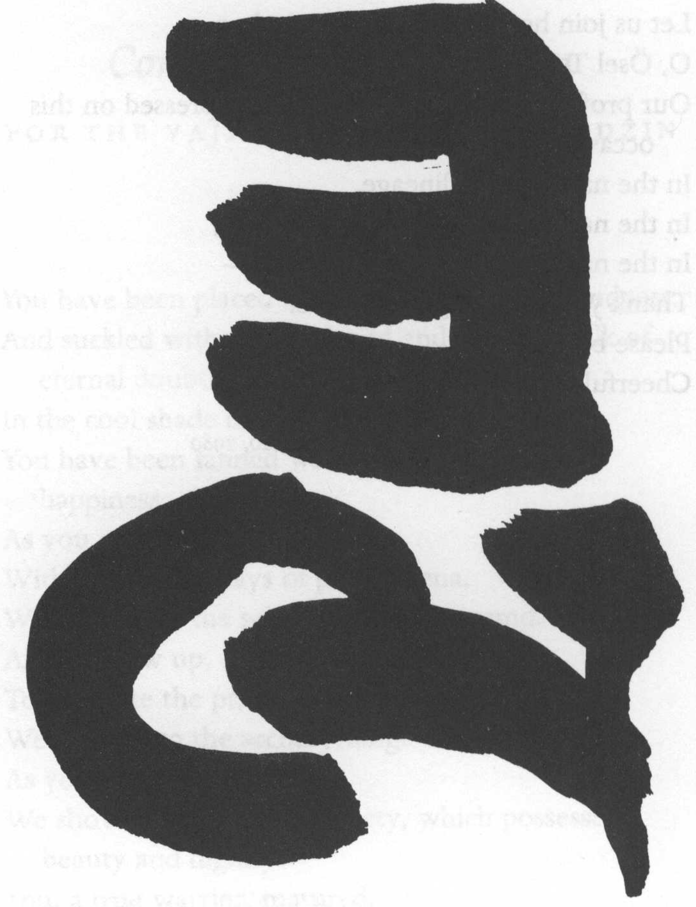
FOR THE VAJRA REGENT ÖSEL TENDZIN

You have been placed in the cradle of loving-kindness,
And suckled with the profound and brilliant milk of
eternal doubtlessness.
In the cool shade of fearlessness,
You have been fanned with the fan of joy and
happiness.
As you grew older,
With various displays of phenomena,
We led you to the self-existing playground.
As you grew up,
To promote the primordial confidence,
We led you to the archery range of the warriors.
As you developed further,
We showed you human society, which possesses
beauty and dignity.
You, a true warrior, matured,
Developed eternally youthful confidence without
beginning or end.
We take pride in you, that you have witnessed the
Great Eastern Sun.

Sometimes we worry about you:
How we can ward off the evils of the setting sun.

Other times we appreciate you:
You are a true manifestation of our vision.
We request you to become more merciful,
And we rejoice that you are the dharma heir.
Let us join heaven and earth together.
O, Ösel Tendzin,
Our profound love and gratitude is expressed on this
occasion.
In the name of the lineage,
In the name of the Vajradhatu sangha,
In the name of myself and my wife—
Thank you for being as you are.
Please be good.
Cheerful birthday!

July 10, 1980



Da (Moon).

Mantric Keltic Incantation

When man's heart is weeping for pleasure,
There comes a sore point which looks for leisure;
Thirdly, we find ourselves cultivating laziness.
The turmoil of the sky and the ocean
Waits for the land to pronounce on their argument.
Here we are caught in the middle of a threesome—
The infamous Cape Breton of Nova Scotia.
Joy and pleasure are one for the fishermen;
Happy and sad may be different, because of their
individuality.
In the thickets of fog,
In the turmoil of weather,
We find ourselves unable to land on this ground
When we are riding the eagle or the airplane.
In the midst of their conflict with each other,
We always hear the argument between atmosphere
and earth.
The earth in Nova Scotia, at least in Cape Breton, is
somewhat innocent,
But we are still waiting for the occasional punch line.
The earth has to be drilled for oil,
Or any kind of excavation,
So that local fish become pieces of gold or of diamond.
However, Cape Breton is psychological:
The hope and fear constantly build and disperse,

Along with the waves of the ocean.
Cape Breton is emotional:
Whether we can hold a seat or build a city.
I wonder—it might be advisable to plant a few
 crocodiles on the coast of Cape Breton!
Or should we place a vajra storm by working with
 heaven's wrath!
Do you think there are such possibilities at all?
On one hand the Cape Breton doesn't deserve
 extraordinary pleasure,
But on the other hand it might certainly be good for
 the Cape Breton,
Which brings land and sky together
So that heaven and earth can join in Nova Scotia at all.
Let us see.
Let us do.
But do before we see.
On the other hand, see before we do.
Good luck to the Nova Scotia vision.
Rejoice! The Great Eastern Sun arises!

November 27, 1980
Keltic Lodge
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

On the occasion of the first seminar taught by Chögyam Trungpa in Nova Scotia.

Merrier Than the Maritimes

Nova Scotia as seen at its best:
How the earth and sky can relate with mist and rain
and the frustrations of fishermen.
Cape Forchu at Yarmouth brings us eye-opening
possibilities of Pembroke Shore,
Kelly Cove introduces us into Darling Lake,
As we reach Port Maitland we discover the possibilities
of Cape St. Mary which brings us to Meteghan
River,
By way of Bay of Fundy we find ourselves in Digby,
As we approach further we find ourselves realizing
Port George,
As we begin to look forward to Cape Split,
Our journey goes further:
How should we enter into the country—
Whether it should be by way of Cape Blomidon or
elsewhere—
Evangeline Beach is tempting—
But should we ride on a horse to conquer Dartmouth
across land,
Or should we sail around by way of Cape Sable—
We are inspired to be in Halifax;
Gentlemen from Glen Haven might have something
to say about our trip altogether,
As we sweep across the peninsula,

We find ourselves cultivating Cape Capstan,
And cutting the tie with the mainland at Amherst,
Including pylons and electrical systems and all the rest
of it;
As we reach Heather Beach,
We might be tempted to be in Fox Harbour;
The eastern sunrise trail becomes questionable at that
point:
Whether we have eastern sunrise or not,
Our only reference point is Pictou,
Where we stayed before:
There the land and heaven are joined together,
Seemingly we enjoyed ourselves;
New Glasgow is a fantastic area,
As to relating with luscious earth,
As to bringing general prosperous outlook overcoming
industrialism,
We are attracted to Cape George;
Depth of the earth could be brought out by means of
Big Marsh,
Local vision can be brought together in the County of
Antigonish,
By working together with Guysborough County,
So we have a chance to bring together the mainland
and build big city,
In the name of Pictou-Guysborough,
We could invite any potential prosperous and elegant
situation as possible London, Paris, Rome, blah blah
blah;
The county of Inverness,
We will continue to the top point of Cape St.
Lawrence,
We will build high point of sane society,
With the courtesy of Victoria County, Keltic Lodge
and Ingonish are included,

Thus we go further:
In County of Cape Breton we raise the morale of
Sydney,
With the help of Richmond County,
The total vision of Nova Scotia should be based on
Capital of Sydney.
When Sydney is raised to its highest level,
The rest of the peninsula can be brought up at its best.
Thus we partly conquer the Atlantic Ocean.
Victory to the true command.
Take pride in our peninsula.

November 29, 1980
Keltic Lodge
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

When one reads this poem while looking at a map, it becomes apparent that the Dorje Dradül probably was describing a journey by sea, and that he is referring to that fact in the opening lines: "Nova Scotia as seen at its best: How the earth and sky can relate with mist and rain and the frustrations of fishermen."

I opted to use very few periods in the punctuation of this poem for two reasons: the first is that so many of the lines could refer either to what precedes or what follows them—or both. This poem is an excellent example of the Dorje Dradül's uncanny ability to use the English language so that a clause or phrase refers in several directions. Normally, in English we require that a phrase have a single, definite referent. In "Merrier Than the Maritimes" phrases are left so that they can refer in two directions simultaneously. The second reason for the punctuation was that the poem is a constantly moving journey that begins in Yarmouth and does not stop until it reaches Sydney. There are several pauses, which are reflected by semicolons; however, there are no periods after the initial one until the journey reaches its destination.

Like so many of the things that the Dorje Dradül did and said, this poem reveals layer after layer of subtlety if one takes the time to read it carefully. So, to all of the readers: Bon Voyage.

—Carolyn Gimian, August 19, 1994

La Conference du Soleil du Grand Est

So timid but good
So genuine but trying to hard
So woolly but not having enough sheep
So thorny but not having enough thistles
So cloudy but not having enough rain
So wavy but not having enough wind—
Jolly good show that we have Canadian Dharmadhatu.
It is so moving that we can almost cry.
To say the least, we can cry.
So wavy we have lots of wind
So cloudy that we might have snowstorm
So woolly that we can catch lots of fish—
Catching the four maras,
The first dharma taught in Canada is victorious.
On the boundaries and at the center we found
  numerous gossips;
At the same time it is nice to be in an environment
  where the only gossip is the chattering ocean
  beating the rocks.
Canadian conference is so good that we find ourselves
  gasping with ordinary mind.
Good mind is allowed to speak for itself in Cape
  Breton without borrowing Esalen pseudo wisdom.
With natural dignity as subjects of the Queen of
  England,

Canadians take lots of pride as traditionalist triple-
lionist
Harpist
Single-lion-ist
And triple-fleur-de-lis-ist.
We take pride in the triple maple leaves.
Dharma comes to Canada with a dot in space
As tiger lion garuda dragon and three-jewel principle.
Dharmadhatu Canada has woken up lots of sleepy
Canadians and slowed down lots of busy Canadians.
Dharmadhatu Canada has created the crown jewel of
Vajradhatu as Canada deserves.
Vajradhatu Canada is certainly the king's ransom.
Obviously, the Vajradhatu Canada is the best crown
jewel,
Sitting quite self-snugly on top of Canada,
With the three jewels and their flame permeating the
ten directions,
Sitting on the throne of Les États-Unis d'Amérique du
Nord.
Rejouissez-vous! le soleil du grand est se lève.
Le point dans l'espace,
L'armure de la vie,
Manifestent l'intrépidité.
Le voyage vers l'est est périlleux,
Néanmoins nous le trouvons extraordinaire.
Par accident, nous découvrons le soleil du grand est.
Hey! Ho! mesdames et messieurs,
Approchez et joignez-vous à l'expédition du grand
orient.
Nous avons trouvé le Canada par pure coincidence,
Nous avons découverts qu'il est le soleil du grand est.
Déclarons le Canada première découverte du soleil du
grand est.

En l'honneur de la vision Shambhala,
Enlaçons-le, embrassons-le.
Ô soleil du grand est canadien,
Nous t'avons trouvé au Keltic Lodge.
Venez et célébrez!

December 4, 1980
Keltic Lodge
Ingonish, Nova Scotia

Turning Point

Learning is difficult.
Growing up is painful.
Conquering is arduous.
Discipline is endless.

With your exertion and dedication, sooner or later
You will learn how to swallow the sun and moon
Together with a galaxy of stars.
You will learn to ride the tiger.
You will fly with the banner of the Great Eastern Sun.
Come along and join us!

Cheerful birthday, my son.
You should supersede your father.
May the wisdom of the Rigdens be with you on this
occasion.
May the blessings of the Kagyü and the Nyingma
lineages guide you forevermore.

January 16, 1981
Lake Louise, Alberta

To the Sawang Ösel Mukpo on his eighteenth birthday.

You Might Be Tired of the Seat That You Deserve

FOR THE VAJRA REGENT AT MIDSUMMER'S DAY

Dearly loved comrade,
If you do not hold the seat,
Others may take it away;
If you do not sit on a rock,
It becomes mushy clay;
If you don't have patience to sit on a rock or seat,
They give you away;
If you are not diligent in holding the throne,
Some opportunist will snatch it away;
If you are tired of your seat,
Some interior decorator will rearrange it;
If you don't have a throne,
You cannot speak or proclaim from it,
So the audience will dissipate;
If you don't have a government seat to sit on,
Your wisdom and command seal will be snatched by
others;
If you run around, thinking that you have a seat to
come back to,
It will be washed away by the turbulent river,
Like a presidential platform;
You can never proclaim your command:

Either it will be disassembled by the cockroaches
Or the frivolous multitude will take it away as
souvenirs.

It may be hard to sit on the seat,
But one must endure it.
Do sit on your seat,
Whether it is hard or soft.
Once you sit on your seat,
The sitting itself becomes truly command and
message;
Then, undoubtedly, multitudes of people will respect
and obey it
As the vajra throne of Bodhgaya where Buddha taught.
Truth becomes exertion.
The message of hard fact proclaims itself,
So you don't have to emphasize harder truth.
Offering your seat in order to please others will not
give authentic reward—
They will take the attitude that you are a pleasant seat-
offerer.
So, my son, please don't move around;
Assume your seat, and sit, and be.
If you be that way, truth prevails;
Command is heard throughout the land.
So sit and hold your seat.
Then you will enjoy, because others will admire you.
This is hard to do, but easy to accomplish.

June 21, 1981

When I Ride a Horse

When I ride a horse,
I hold my seat.
When I play with snakes,
I snap them on my wrist.
When I play with dangerous maidens,
I let them talk first.

July 2, 1981

Hunting the Setting-Sun Moon

Lady with the golden heart
Tinged with the power of juniper smoke—
We have been married for eleven years.
You are the luscious meadow filled with fresh
greenness
And deer frolicking with good head and shoulders, full
of pride.
When I am naughty, you are so kind,
You are so good—
Like the clouds, pure and good:
They do not need to be put through a washing
machine.
It is incredible that you put up with me.
You bear the mark of a unicorn.
Sometimes I wonder why you are so good to me.
Nonetheless, I try to be kind, good, the best husband
that the world could ever provide.
You never hesitate to tell the truth when you see the
falsity.
I have created the Court for you:
Undoubtedly, you deserve it.
Your beauty is that you are never stained by the
wickedness.
Being with you, you are constant.
You are so predictable and yet you are so visionary.

Your breath smells of unstained truth,
Your smile is never meant to win others over.
O sweet Diana, the huntress, the rider,
Empress Lady, I live for you, I die for you.
Up to this point, I have never had an opportunity to
express my adoration.
Lady of life,
Lady who presides over the sun and moon,
You are the Lady who maintains integrity and truth;
You have never violated a single moment of truth since
our marriage.
This is a parting gift in your praise.
We cry and laugh together in this mirror of the world;
Let us conquer the world and radiate the Great Eastern
Sun.
My salutations to you.
I am your companion and humble servant.
Let us shoe the horses in the vajra style.
O queen of queens,
Let us share and have jolly good life together, Diana.

July 10, 1981

On the eve of departing on a journey, the Vidyadhara wrote a poem for his wife, Lady Diana Mukpo. "The huntress" refers to the goddess Diana in Roman mythology.

Timely Innuendo

FOR LOPPÖN LODRÖ DORJE

The burning heart of reality kindles the twigs of
awesome truth.
Men's fate depends on their actions.
Mysticism is plumage on one's hat.
Let us dance with the Loppön!
Your devotion and wisdom are certainly worthy of
praise.

August 18, 1981

Why Reality Is So Real

When you appreciate the harmony of things as they
 are,
You wonder why snakes have forked tongues.
As we study with our teachers,
We wonder why the dharmas are so true.
When we lie on our backs—why the sky is so blue.
When we smile to our friends—why it brings
 equilibrium.
O father guru, the only thing I can say is, you never
 cheat us,
And your gift is so true and real and precious.
The questions of why and how are futile.
Thank you.

August 22, 1981
Dorje Dzong

Fearlessness and Joy Are Truly Yours

When a warrior king presents a gift,
It should be naked flame
Which consumes the jungle of ego,
Or ice cold mountain range
Which cools the heat of aggression.
On the other hand, it could be a parachute,
Which questionably will open or not.
There is a further choice—thunderbolt:
Whether you are capable of holding it with a bare hand is up to you.
So, my heartfelt son, take them and use them
In the way that the past warriors have done.
You have the strength and capability as well as careful training.
Please cherish this standard of mine, the tiger lion garuda dragon dignity flag.
So you will accomplish maitri, karuna, joy, and greater vision.
With the work that you have performed and lots of sacrifice for the sake of greater sangha,
And bringing about Great Eastern Sun for the enlightened society,
You deserve to live a thousand years—
Whether you like it or not.

You have learned a lot, performed magnificently.
I the humble Vajracharya, along with my wife, would
like to wish cheerful birthday to you, my lord.

August 20, 1981
The Kalapa Court
Boulder, Colo.

A birthday poem for the Vajra Regent.

A Heart Lost and Discovered

If there is no full moon in the sky,
How is it possible to see the reflection in the pond?
If the tiger has sharp claws,
How is it possible not to use them?
How could we bake our bread
If there were no fire?
At the death of the Karmapa we become softened and
devotional.
It is true,
Those who have never cried in their lives, cry this
time,
And shed tears that will water the earth:
So, we can produce further flowers and greenery.

November 14, 1981

On the death of His Holiness Rangjung Rikpe Dorje, the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa.

Command

Nuclear catastrophe is imminent;
Man's aggression to kill himself or others is imminent;
Tiger hates his or her stripes and is going to untiger;
Yet Karmapa never left a declaration of independence.
The Kagyü kingdom is intact,
If not totally packaged by Vajradhatu of North America.
I am so sad, so devastated,
I feel I have lost my head;
But I have gained a new head, a Karmapa head.
For better or worse I will rule according to Karmapa's
imperial command:
I will remain as the Emperor of Kalapa.
We still allow people to smile and grin:
Human beings' habitual patterns are obviously the best
of their ability to create a society of their own,
Whether they are tiger, lion, yak, or buffalo.
We like America in its buffaloness:
Let America be buffalo kingdom, in spite of the unicorns.
Cheerio, as we say in Britain.
You deserve your cheerfulness, nonetheless.

December 20, 1981
Boulder, Colo.

Composed during a ceremony marking the cremation of the sixteenth Karmapa.

Golden Sun

FOR SHIBATA KANJURO XX, ARCHERY MASTER

In this land of *kami-no-yama,* I still miss you.
We are all longing for your wisdom.
As you know, we have lost our leader the Karmapa,
But it is comforting to have you as good friend and
teacher.
The mirror has never stopped reflecting,
The *kiku* has never stopped blossoming;
Yumi still twangs
Ya still fly:
Our students constantly practice and look forward to
your further teaching.
I, your friend, am getting old and sick,
But still my heart's blood turns into liquid iron.
The strength of appreciation for the warrior heritage
Is part of my metallic blood,
And my bones are made out of meteoric iron.

Profound respect to you, Sensei, on your birthday:
May the Great Eastern Sun continuously arise in your
life, with happiness and prosperity.

December 29, 1981

As Skylarks Hunt for Their Prey

As skylarks hunt for their prey,
I am captured by their stillness.

I experience neither thirst nor hunger,
But skylarks captivate my memory.

Whistling arrows on the battlefield remind me of my
general's bravery:
Should I run away or should I stay?

Buddhism neither tells me the false nor the true:
It allows me to discover myself.

Shakyamuni was so silent:
Should I complain against him?

December 31, 1981

How to Be Old Shambhalians and Youthful Propagators of Shambhala

Burning trees produce smoke.
Kings who will become kings produce burning trees.
Queens who will become would-be queens produce
  small brooks.
Wood chips hit the rocks;
Nonetheless, ministers would sweep gently in the air
As they choose what kind of trees they should blow:
Aspen, tamarisk, rhododendrons, pine, birch.

The kingdom settles as peasants delight in their
  lambing season,
Foals bounce around,
Warriors sharpen their swords in the mountain brook,
Bowmakers look for yak horn and willow bark,
Highlanders with their greasy, weathered smile discuss
  the season
But produce an abundance of butter and cheese,
Lowlanders darkened by the sun's stroke work with
  the ripening grain.

The people of Shambhala rejoice,
Learning that their children will pick up greater
  wisdom

In the midst of short pine trees and rocks weather-
beaten from the ocean.
Constant rain and mist are no disturbance in the life of
Shambhalians.

We occasionally welcome foreign visitors.
Economically we are self-centered:
Shambhalians are the great merchants who travel
across the rest of the world.
Fearing no one, we exchange oil for water, diamond
for agate, wool with silk.
Because we self-exist, Shambhalians have no fear or
hope.

I am so happy and proud to be the first subject of
Shambhala.
May the Great Eastern Sun pervade our nation.
May we have no fear of who we are.
May we know who we are, and accept our intelligence.
Victory to Shambhala!
May the Great Eastern Sun arise.

January 9, 1982
Boulder, Colo.

How Typical Student Poetry Should Be

When the enlightened one was with us,
When he talked to us,
When he walked with us,
When he fixed his robes,
When he washed his hands after a meal,
The enlightened one was always precise, accurate.
He possessed ideal total shinjang,[1] without reference
point.
He was playful and he was accurate.
He was clean, neat, tidy.
Watching his fingers, it was beautiful
The way Buddha handled his begging bowl.
He had no discriminating against or, for that matter,
rejection of the way phenomena work:
Buddha worked with a blade of grass,
Pebbles, dirt, in his begging bowl.
He washed his robes with such precision.

We like the way the Buddha is in action.
Watching working Buddha is magnificent.
There is no discrepancy.
Buddha is the best friend,

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1. The quality of being tamed or processed, which results from the practice of meditation.

He is the best at working with the unworkables.
Therefore he is the king.
The best monarch we could ever find is the Buddha.
The Buddha's gaze and the Buddha's hands—
The way he washes his hands—
He washes his hands as a monarch would.
He is not arrogant,
He is humble and genuine and imperial.
We like Buddha's way:
Imperial humbleness.
There is no one like him.
That is why we call him samyaksambuddha.[2]

O how much I love you Buddha!
The way you do things properly,
The way you feel the world around you,
You have no aggression—
O Buddha! O Tathagata![3]
You are so tamed,
You are so beautiful,
You are so royal,
You are so humble.
O to be like you, the genuine Buddha
Who need not clarify or validate
You are buddha as Buddha.
O how gorgeous to be Buddha!

We love your simplicity.
We are glad that you took human birth and that you
conducted yourself in the human realm.
O Buddha, samyaksambuddha,

2. A Sanskrit epithet for the Buddha which means "the completely perfect awakened one."

3. Another epithet, which means "he who has gone beyond."

We love you.
Astonished that you are Buddha,
Fascinated that you are Buddha,
Totally captivated that you are Buddha,
We are inspired to follow your example.
Shakyamuni,[4] O Buddha, we love you.
We are your best friend, O best friend.

Homage to the Sambuddha,[5] the perfect being.
I, Chögyam, emulate you.
O Buddha,
Namo buddhaya
Buddham sharanam gacchami.[6]

by Dharma Sagara, Ananda,
Buddha Das, Hotei.[7]

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4. The name of the historical Buddha, which means "sage of the Shakya [clan]"

5. The perfect buddha, or the perfectly awake one.

6. The last two lines of the poem are Sanskrit and mean: "Homage to the Buddha / I take refuge in the Buddha."

7. Chögyam Trungpa signed this poem with four names, or titles. *Dharma Sagara* is Sanskrit for *Chögyam* and means "Dharma Ocean." *Ananda* was the servant and a close disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. *Buddha Das* is a mixture of Sanskrit and Hindi, which means "servant of the Buddha." *Hotei* is the name of a legendary Chinese Zen master, known for his crazy-wisdom teachings. He is the model for the fat, round-bellied figures that traditionally bring good luck and wealth.

Death or Life

Death or life:
I still grind the sun and moon.
Whether your kingdom is accomplished or not,
I will be the ghost that will manifest tiger and garuda.
Whether it is a joke or serious business,
I will hang around as a ghost or anger
Until you succeed in accomplishing the Kingdom of
Shambhala.
Joy for you.
Nonetheless, powerful haunting cloud should hover in
your household and on your head:
The Dorje Dradül as misty clouds or brilliant sun.
I will be with you until you establish your kingdom.

July 23, 1982
The Regent's Club
Boulder, Colo.

Early Testimony: Sun Will Never Set

Eagle eating snake,
According to the Mexicans, was the foundation of
  Mexico City.
Similarly in our case,
Thundering dragon
Expanding garuda
Fiery tiger
Snowy lion.
No human being is afraid of death.
We are all terrified of death.
We seek for all kinds of possibilities of avoiding death
  and illness.
Occasional fortunes help us to avoid death and
  disasters in life.
However, in speaking with genuine appreciation of
  cause and effect, sunset and sunrise,
We cannot avoid such calamity.
It is not really calamity,
It is a haphazard joke that is being played on us.
We are experiencing birth death old age and so forth.
That is not particularly a joke.
But it is a sense of humor of some kind, nonetheless.
Out of those situations, we come up with true
  experience of life.
Powerful death

Powerful sickness
Powerful old age
Powerful birth—
We could use those as strength to enliven ourselves.
Those problems, so-called problems, are not regarded
as obstacles.

We can bring up our children properly
And let them have good education of the world,
Telling them world is not so kind, not so cruel.
Our world is just like climate:
We cannot blame the winter or invite the summer.
Let us tell our children to learn to be decent,
That they do not have to be heroic or ordinary,
Unless they choose so.
Children are good—
They learn our message simultaneously by watching us.

So we take pride in warriorship.
Even though we might be sunken in dirt, a naked child;
Even though we might be frozen to death in Eskimo
land.
Whatever the case may be, we regard it as the warrior
path
In which we march along, and reality is there as we
march.
Shambhalians might experience alienation,
We might be regarded as weirdos.
Still, as is said in the text,
When the warrior finds cowardice, that is the
beginning of fearlessness.

Vidyadhara the Venerable
Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche
August 20, 1982
The Kalapa Court
Boulder, Colo.

Warmth in the House

Garuda's wings
Dragon's roar
Confused child
Lion's cuddle
Tiger brings food—
Shambhala Household.

August 22, 1982
Dekyong Council Meeting
Boulder, Colo.

A copy of this poem hung in the kitchen of the Kalapa Court for a number of years.

Don't Go to the Dentist with Such Good Teeth

VACT Sunrise—no regret.

VROT When things get complicated,
We should let it be that way.

VACT Trident is so simple—
Not to speak of its blade.

VROT If sharpness is a problem,
Then our intention should sharpen itself.

VACT Axe for justice,
Arrow for acute precision,
Sword—the warrior never misses.
Such bloodshed is good.

VROT The heart of regret is like fine glass;
The heart of the warrior is finer still—
Shattered, broken into pieces—
The best way is without complaint.

VACT Junior artichoke, mango about to ripen,
Oranges saying, "Eat me"—

How could you abandon this beautiful
  world?
Bite a lemon and appreciate its sourness.

Chögyam Trungpa (VACT) with the
  Vajra Regent, Ösel Tendzin
  (VROT)
August 22, 1982
Boulder, Colo.

Natural Sanctuary without Shrine

Dancer and singer are beautiful.
Sun and moon are bright.
Antelope and deer are composed.
Tulip is so beautiful.
Rose grows without being told.
We as human beings develop without being told:
Some of us tell ourselves we are good; some, that we are bad.
Natural dignity need never be told.
Natural goodness is.
That *isness* never needs to be told or taught to anybody.
Good for Shambhala vision!
We never run out of vision.

August 29, 1982
Oakland, Calif.

Child's Concept of Death

Warriors die and are born.
So do swallows die and are born.
In this blue sky—
Sun shines,
Moon sets,
Anything could happen.
May the rhododendrons never die.

Juniper should not die.
I will die one day,
Maybe without knowing.

August 29, 1982
Oakland, Calif.

Written following the final talk of a Shambhala Training Level F.

Battle Cry

Riding on the horse who is impeccably, militarily
trained,
Carrying the six weapons with one's head and
shoulders up for the warfare,
Contemplating whether you are fighting in the name
of passion or aggression—
Could you crush a jar of honey with your fist or slash
it with a sword?—
I am wondering whether I am what I am.
My deeds and thoughts will synchronize in the name
of great dralas.
I wonder whether I can kiss the sword,
Or lick the blade.
Shock should not be the warrior's startle;
But beauty and gentleness are the warrior's treasure.
When man fights man, should there be bloodshed?
Wallowing in one's depression doesn't seem to be the
way to achieve true warriorship.
I enjoy field of blooming warriors who chant war cry.
I also enjoy warriors riding horses that never buck but
smoothly sail through enemy troops.

September 5, 1982
Rocky Mountain Dharma Center

Farewell to Boulder

It was Karma Dzong,
It was full moon,
It was sunshine,
It was Karma Dzong—
The way the sun shines
And the way the moon eclipses,
The way the tortilla is shaped,
The way the curries taste,
The way the Mataam Fez operates,
The way the Kobe An executes,
The way the Karma Dzong operates,
The way the sun shines in Boulder,
The way the people smile in Boulder,
The way the real estate operates,
The way the men work,
The way the women feel,
The way sexuality is handled.

It is time for us to change to a new planet,
Fresh planet,
Extra planet.
It is time for us to go elsewhere,
Where donkeys can talk,
Horses can play,
Dogs can run.

It is time to go where sunshine is not all that frequent,
It is time to avoid the Flatirons,
It is time to avoid ponderosa,
It is time to come closer to the ocean,
It is time to take pride in the small island,
It is time to be small,
It is not time to be big,
It is time to be modest,
It is time to eat fish as opposed to meat,
It is time to move to Nova Scotia,
It is time to enjoy the crescent moon, at least a
croissant!
It is time to be a human being.
It is time to *be.*
Be in Nova Scotia,
Be in little island,
Be in fresh air.
Let us be natural,
Let us not ask any questions,
Let us drop all the questions,
Let us be,
Be, be, be.

Hail to the discovery!
We have discovered something very ordinary
But we have experienced something extraordinary.
Let us be,
Let us discover,
Let us celebrate,
Let us appreciate,
Let us celebrate that we have discovered insignificant
island,

Let us appreciate the ordinariness of it,
Let us celebrate!

D.D.M.
October 25, 1982
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Sanity Is Joyful

Riding on a white horse,
Carrying the full blade sword,
With the victorious view without wearing glasses—
As I hear the fluttering of banner of victory,
As I smell the horse dung,
As I hear the chattering troops along with their suits of armor—
Maybe I am so romantic
And so brave,
As I carry bow and arrow in my hand—
It is better than making love to maiden.
As I defeat the enemy, I feel so good,
I feel so compassionate,
And love and kindness to my enemies.
That is why I will say,
Ki Ki So So!
Maybe Dorje Dradül is mad,
But on the other hand
The sanest person on earth is the Dorje Dradül.
Ki Ki So So!

D.D.M.
October 27, 1982
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Shambhala Is True

Once upon a time there was a rock named Eternal
Rock.
Tigers and lions, garudas and dragons, shit on it, peed
on it.
But still that rock remained.
In fact, that rock turned into jade rock, proclaiming
inscrutability.
That rock produced caves where various warriors can
be born,
Eternally Shambhala children, whether boys or girls
doesn't matter.
That rock produced horses and saddles, armor and
helmets.
Shall we call this unthinkable or thinkable vision?
Sometimes the Great Eastern Sun gives birth.
Sometimes the Great Western Moon smiles.
Let us have kingdom.
Let us have pine tree that urinates in your mouth.
Let us have chrysanthemum that smiles in the midst
of chaos.
Let us have peonies that haven't taken a bath or
shower for several months.
Let us have Kingdom of Shambhala.

Let us fly with the horse of the Great Eastern lungta.
Let us be outrageous and humble.

January 2, 1983
The Officers' Club, Kalapa Assembly
Bedford Springs, Pa.

Embryonic Thunderbolt

Learn first.
Act afterward.
Proceed as we grow.

Don't cuddle with tiger cubs.
Don't eat raw meat in front of lion.
Be decisive.
Study the warriors of the past.

View the world as sunny-side-up egg.
Laugh with garudas so that you can create thunder like
  dragon.
Past memories of the warriors are important.
Pay heed to the sting of scorpion.
College of Denma has occurred.

April 11, 1983
Concord, Mass.

On leadership and command for the College of Denma.

How to Govern with Wisdom

Hit on head.
Play with the fingers.
Expel the dirty dozen.
Hammer is good way to wake oneself up.
Secateur is good to cut liar's tongue.
Guillotine is excellent for governmental purposes.
Theplong is good to wake the lazy ones.
Benevolent democracy is good
Yet benevolent dictatorship is better.
Open a bottle of burgundy and drink it until you die.
Have a good reception.
Let us celebrate whether we are dead or alive.

April 11, 1983
Concord, Mass.

Seasons' Greetings

Emerging to the surface,
Such virginity
Blossoming as a teenager—
Wish I were Spring's father.

As the thunder gathers rain,
Flowers drink water;
Arrogant greenery has no hesitation.
Summer provides festivity, and life is worth living.

Hot pregnant mother
Preparing the eggs and sperm for the next year:
So voluptuous and ostentatious.
O Autumn, I will never go to bed with you,
But you come to dinner with me.

Constriction and rigidity of your martial law do not
frighten me,
You give me chills and shivers;
But the way you decorate the mountains—
I admire your extravaganza.

May 9, 1983

Dance while Weeping

Desolate sun, you come closer and closer.
Would you mind if I try to chase the moon
Whose reflection is in the melting pond?
Spring gives me possibilities of infidelity.

The cosmic law lied to me.
If everything blossoms, butterflies will dance.
I neither danced nor bloomed.
With gray hair I passed you, O summer.

The rich farmers have abundant grain.
Throngs of fruits fill the baskets.
Watching the autumn moon behind dark and silvery
  clouds,
I am still hungry, singing the songs of loneliness.

Geese are happily free to fly to the south.
Peacocks shiver without feathers.
In this deep frozen world of ice and snow,
Nesting birds and wild animals are attacked by natural
  calamity.
The joyful sound of cuckoos has vanished.
I huddle in my house with one burning lamp, counting
  my heartbeats.

How could you have devastated my life?
O winter, go away.

May 11, 1983
Fasnacloich
Dublin, N.H.

Four Season Haiku Tiger

SPRING
Shifty fire
Amber with coal
I detect something in the jungle

SUMMER
Tigers get good bath
Fresh look of their coat
Competes with clean bamboo leaves

AUTUMN
Maple leaves might pounce
Tigers might become maple leaves
The dichotomy is in visual art

WINTER
Highland bamboo
Conference of geese
Tiger might smile at the south

May 13, 1983
Fasnacloich
Dublin, N.H.

The Meek

POWERFULLY NONCHALANT AND DANGEROUSLY SELF-SATISFYING

In the midst of thick jungle
Monkeys swing,
Snakes coil,
Days and nights go by.
Suddenly I witness you,
Striped like sun and shade put together.
You slowly scan and sniff, perking your ears,
Listening to the creeping and rustling sounds:
You have supersensitive antennae.
Walking gently, roaming thoroughly,
Pressing paws with claws,
Moving with the sun's camouflage,
Your well-groomed exquisite coat has never been
touched or hampered by others.
Each hair bristles with a life of its own.
In spite of your feline bounciness and creeping slippery
accomplishment,
Pretending to be meek,
You drool as you lick your mouth.
You are hungry for prey—
You pounce like a young couple having orgasm;
You teach zebras why they are black and white;

You surprise haughty deer, instructing them to have a
 sense of humor along with their fear.
When you are satisfied roaming in the jungle,
You pounce as the agent of the sun:
Catching pouncing clawing biting sniffing—
Such meek tiger achieves his purpose.
Glory be to the meek tiger
Roaming, roaming endlessly.
Pounce, pounce in the artful meek way,
Licking whiskers with satisfying burp.
Oh, how good to be tiger!

May 13, 1983

Swallowing the Moon as We Feel Free

Let us swallow the moon
Let us give birth to the sun
Let us lick the sharp sword
Let us ride the stallions, saddled with crescent moon
Let us not be terrified
Let us relax on the earth of Shambhala ground
Where the skylarks roam freely
And where the arrogant deer frolic
Let us celebrate in this Midsummer's festivity where
clouds float freely.

Midsummer's Day 1983
Lord Nelson Kalapa Camp
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Constantly Falling in Love

You are the sun that dispels darkness.
You are the moon that creates smile.
You are my heart—
Incredible companion.
Most beautiful, dazzling light in my life,
May the Great Eastern Sun inspire you.
Let us work together,
And let us be together
In this life and lives to come.
Glory be to the Tiger Lady,
The goddess of moon.
I love you, Diana.

Mukpo the Terrible
August 1983

Never Flinching

It is not expensive to be handsome
To build a rainbow is very cheap
Peonies compete with chrysanthemums
Blue sky has never been painted
Gold is golden by its own dignity

Giving is as satisfying as biting a melon
Loneliness is satisfying because it doesn't compete
with anything
Pine trees have never been built
Tiger lilies and spider chrysanthemums dance together

We are not afraid
If we were so, we wouldn't be here together
Achievement is not a product of ostentatiousness
Never get tired of drinking jasmine tea
Longing makes you so satisfied
Combing your hair makes you want to comb further

Let us be fearless like misty clouds arising on a
beautiful mountain slope
Let us watch the crescent moon
Let us watch the golden rising sun
Come and join us
Come and dance together

Wicked is skinny
Virtuous is fat
As time goes on, let us grow up and not be insulted

October 31, 1984
Kalapa Manor

Pure and Powerful as Peonies

Pure and powerful as peonies
I have no hesitation whatsoever
As if swaying in the wind.

Lots of subjects
Gathering together
To make flower arrangements
Of themselves

Haiku with Kalapa Ikebana
May 17, 1985
Crossroads Gardens
Boulder, Colo.

Sound Cycles

Trishula

Trident Trishula Trident Trishula Trident Trishula
Ta Ta Tri Tri Tri
Tish Tish Tishshsh Tshshool
Tshshool Tshshool Tshshool-LA
Trishula Trishula shshoola shshoola
Trishula Th Th Th Th
Teeth Teeth Bite Biting-teeth Biter
Bluh Bleh Blade
Blade Blade Blade Blade Blade Blade
Needle
Needle-ette
Small Needle
Point
Trident Trident Trident

Except in English words, pronounce *T* soft, halfway between *d* and *t*. In the sixth line, pronounce *Th* as in *thumb*. Roll the *r*'s, except in English words.

Sutra

Sssoo Sssoo Soot Soot Sootr
Sootr Sutra Soootra Sutroom
Sootroom Sootree Sootro-EE

Oo Ay Oh Oh Ay Oh Ee
Sooodj Sooodj
Junction
Sutra Junction Junction Junction
Junction Junction
Confluence Union United
Unified
United Unified Junction of Confluence
United Unified Junction of Sutra

Roll the *r* in *sootr* and throughout this cycle.

AHAM

Mmuh Mmuh-uh Uh-muh
Ha Ha Aha Aha Aham
Aham Ahammmm Mama
Ahammm Me Mmuh-ee
Ee Mmuh-ee Ee-muh Mmuh-ee
My My-yin My-yin Me My
Mine Me Me My My My Mama Mama-yin
Mama-yin Mommy My-teeth
Teeth Muh-teeth Muthuh Muth
Muth Mother Mow-ther
Owther Other Oh-mother Oh-me
Mother Mother Oh-mother
Mothers Anonymous . . .
Ah-mother Aham-mother Ahummuh

The *h* is an aspirated *h*. The *th* in *Muthuh* and *Muth* is the hard *th* as in *thumb*. *U* and *uh* throughout also as in *thumb*.

Elocution Exercises

Instead of Americanism
Speak the English Language Properly!

The English Monarch has a white bow,
Thoroughly splendid and monumental.
Because it serves England,
It is more than daring.

The fabulous mountain deer roams.
The hair of the black tiger is tantalizing.
The world of the blue spider is tattered.
Whether we make war or not—
Roaming in the orchard is dangerous; autumn trees are
armed.

The vicissitudes of one's life are like drowning in a
glass pond.
The Liberty Bell cannot be sold as a gorgeous antique.
I'm sorry to say your mother might think otherwise.

Humor and Delight with the English Language

Darling, your mustache is merely a tired signature.
A celebratory metal transplant has been cordially
ordered from Persia.

The preparatory record was hurried.
Detail from the discourse was like gaudy city clothing.
Asian hooves crushed the tiara in the palace
  quadrangle.
Brocade colors of military and monastery fluttered.

Playing with the English Language

From mirror arose proclamation of dancing
  nonthought. Got it?
The summer odor of raw earth turned the falcon
  fanciful.
The role of the durable donkey slowed my motorcar.
I dare say there is sword advertisement.
I adore a bird and butterscotch.

Selected Writings

PREFACE TO

First Thought Best Thought

THUNDER AND OCEAN.
This simple book of poetry presents evidence of how the Tibetan mind can tune into the Western mind. There is nothing extraordinary about this; but the important fact is that East and West can meet together, contradicting Kipling's verse: "Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet."

Upon my arrival in the West, I felt strongly that a meeting of the two minds—culturally, spiritually, metaphysically—could be realized by means of "first thought best thought," the uncontaminated first glimpse of one another. With natural skepticism as well as deep appreciation, I applied myself to examine Western wisdom and uncover the nature of occidental insight. I found that I had to immerse myself thoroughly in everything, from the doctrines of Western religion up to the way people tied their shoelaces. I was intensely curious to discover in all this where were the true heart and the true brain. And I was determined to find these matters out by personal experience, rather than by secondhand account.

When I was learning English in New Delhi, and attempting to read English literature, one day by chance I found in a magazine a simple and beautiful haiku. It may have been an advertisement for some Japanese merchandise or it may have been a piece of Zen literature, but I was impressed and encouraged that the simplicity of its thought could be expressed in the English language. On another occasion, I attended a poetry recitation sponsored by the American women's club, in conjunction with the American Embassy. I was very struck by the reading,

which I recall included works by T. S. Eliot. This was not hymn, chant, mantra, or prayer, but just natural language used as poetry. Afterward, I told the young lady who gave the reading how much I appreciated it. She replied that she was a mere student, traveling in India. She was from Australia, but had been born and educated in Great Britain.

From my early childhood in Tibet, I was always fascinated with language. When I was thirteen, I managed to learn the dialect of the neighborhood where my guru lived, and even some of the natives thought I came from their own district. To me, the vowels and consonants contained tremendous power. By my late teens, I was quite freely able to write poetry, religious or otherwise. So poetic expression had already become natural for me before I left Tibet. Then, when I went from India to England, English became like a second language to me. I used to watch how people would hollow their mouths and purse their lips as they spoke, the way they hissed their *s*'s, the way they said the *d* in "daring," or the way they pronounced *f* as if it were a yogic breathing exercise. I was completely captivated by English pronunciation, and in particular, during my studies at Oxford, by the way the Oxonians spoke.

Poetry, linguistic expression, and music are identical as far as I am concerned. Once I was taken to a college chapel by my dear friend Mr. John Driver to hear the *St. Matthew Passion.* This was such a great discovery, experiencing the tremendous heroism and spiritual passion in that atmosphere of sanctity, that I felt as though the occasion were my private feast. From the beauty of the music I gained further appreciation of the Western legacy. A Tibetan friend who also attended felt nothing of the kind. His reaction was that "we had three boring hours listening to the noise of tin cans, pigeons, and chickens getting their necks wrung." I felt so energized as we came out into the chill of the English night that my friend panicked and thought I was in danger of being converted to Christianity!

After Great Britain, coming to North America was an amazing and amusing fanfare. The way people spoke and behaved with each other was like being in the midst of ten thousand wild horses. Nevertheless, I developed a great respect for the Americans.

I have met many American poets. Some are like coral snakes; some are frolicking deer; some are ripe apples; some are German shepherds who jump to conclusions whenever a sound is heard; some are squirrels minding their own business; some are peacocks who would like to dis-

play themselves but their feathers are falling apart; some are parrots who have no language of their own but pretend to be translators; some are bookworms killing themselves by eating more books; some are like mountains, dignified but proclaiming occasional avalanches; some are like oceans, endless mind joining sky and earth; some are like birds, flying freely, not afraid to take a bird's-eye view of the world; some are like lions—trustworthy, sharp, and kind. I have confronted, worked with, learned from, fought, and fallen in love with these American poets. All in all, the buddhadharma could not have been proclaimed in America without their contribution in introducing dharmic terms and teachings.

In this book of poetry, some selections are traditional, written in Tibetan and then translated as faithfully as possible. Others were composed in English in a stream-of-consciousness style such as has been employed by American poets. Some were written out of delight, appreciating the manner of the English language itself. I hope this humble book of mine may serve to illustrate how the Eastern and Western minds can join together, how dharma can be propagated in the occidental world, and how the English language can develop as a vehicle for proclaiming the dharma throughout the world.

I would like to thank Allen Ginsberg for his introduction and deep friendship, and I would also like to thank all the poets in America who contributed to this book—either positively or negatively. As is said: a month cannot happen without new moon as well as full, light cannot shine without shadows. My profound gratitude to everyone.

This preface was written on the eighteenth day of the fourth month of the Water Pig Year by the drunken Tibetan poet.

With blessings,
Chögyam Trungpa
May 29, 1983
Fasnacloich

Poets' Colloquium

WILLIAM BURROUGHS, ALLEN GINSBERG, W.S. MERWIN, CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE, ANNE WALDMAN, PHILIP WHALEN, AND RICK FIELDS, DAVID ROME, JOSHUA ZIM

Rinpoche: Want to say something?

Burroughs: Well, as I understand it, you're a little bit, shall we say reluctant to admit all these sorts of psychic practices like astral projection, feeling colors with your hands, and telepathy, and so on. My feeling about these things, frankly, is that they're simply fun, like skiing or gliding, learning Mexican cooking or something like that. Do you seriously object to these practices?

Rinpoche: Well, I wouldn't say "reluctant," actually, but the question seems to be that these phenomena we experience are made up in our psychic level, which we can't actually share with somebody. They're not as real as a dollar bill. So that seems to be the problem, always. And, also, there's a tendency to get into a new world, a new dimension that nobody can share, that people in the street can't share, can't experience. And further, how much are we making these things up, or are they actually happening? That's the kind of question. No doubt a lot of experience occurred. They do function on an individual level, but do they in terms of public phenomena? Somebody might see a TWA jet flying overhead, which is everybody's common knowledge. These other things are not exactly common knowledge. It may be common knowledge to a certain particular circle. That seems to be the problematic point. Are we going

to encourage people to pursue something that is purely in their minds or to pursue something they can actually share? And half of the world, or even more than that actually, 99 percent of the world, haven't realized who they are to begin with, so it's quite a burden.

Burroughs: Yes, but the simple consideration I was making was that these things are fun and they are limited. The man in the street can't do hang gliding, he can't do ballooning, he can't do mountain climbing, but is that any reason why those who can shouldn't? And I think the same thing applies to astral travel and other things that are fun. They're not supposed to be any final answer.

Rinpoche: Absolutely not. Everybody is on their own anyway in this world. If they feel rejection from their parents, or if they feel acceptance and enlightenment from their teacher, why not?

Burroughs: I guess all I am saying is that enlightenment should be fun. It isn't always, to be sure.

Ginsberg: Now you're proposing astral travel as enlightenment?

Burroughs: No. I proposed it simply as fun, that's all, like any sort of travel.

Whalen: Why should enlightenment be fun or anything else? Why shouldn't it just be enlightenment? Like it usually is.

Burroughs: Incentive learning. People are more interested in doing something that's fun than not fun. Allen, what do you have to say on this question?

Ginsberg: Well, I've never experienced astral travel except in dreams. I ain't never seen no flying saucers, and all the acid heads that come up to me with all sorts of Tarot with wings and hydra-headed birds coming from Mars with a message of apocalypse, are generally speed freaks so I get turned off to late-nineteenth-century-style magic.

Burroughs: Yes, there's a great turn off in the whole literature of occultism. Such atrocious writing, and there's this sleazy, second-rate thing that's being put down. I mean the whole literature of Theosophy and so on.

Rinpoche: I think that has been a problem, always. I think the whole reason why that thing started was a need to introduce another dimension in thinking, and that was the closest they could come up with. You know, it's such an extraordinary thing. I have experienced astral travel myself, by flying TWA.

Burroughs: May I ask if you've ever tried to read Aleister Crowley?

Rinpoche: Yes. In fact, one of the closest students of Aleister Crowley happens to be a good friend of mine. And we talked a certain amount about it, not a great deal. He's rather discreet about the whole thing, but that area is very interesting.

Burroughs: Well, he did say something very profound. He was simply requoting the Old Man of the Mountain. He said, "Do what thou wilt. That is the whole of the law." Well, now, one person in twenty million knows what they want to do, so this is no invitation to unrestrained behavior.

Rinpoche: Aleister Crowley himself felt the experience of torturing death. Finally, the magic of the world descended on him, which is interesting drama in some sense. There is something operating. Buddhists would say it is karma or karmic force. Or tantrics would say it's the act of the vajra principle or whatever.

Burroughs: Well, this is simply a quote, a restatement of Hassan i Sabbah's dying words, "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted." That means if nothing is true everything is permitted and if all is illusion then you can do anything you want.

Rinpoche: That's true, but we can't jump out the window from the Empire State Building.

Whalen: The thing is, do you want to do anything? What do you want to do?

Burroughs: You are bringing up the whole question of motivation.

Whalen: No, I'm bringing up a question of what do you want to do right now? What is it that you want to do? Supposing that we're all these illusory bodies sitting around here, which we are, and so are you, what is it you want to do?

Burroughs: It cannot be put into words.

Ginsberg: When I first knew Bill in 1945 or 6 he was studying Korzybski's *Science and Sanity*. Do you know that book or of it? General Semantics. The words are not the things they represent, which is like a Western presentation of the fact that the word "table," for example, is not the same as a table. So that a goose in a bottle is a verbal construction and you can get it out the same way you put it in.

Rinpoche: That always puzzles me. How to take the goose out.

Ginsberg: You put it in the bottle. You take it out of the bottle.

Rinpoche: I'm not so sure.

Ginsberg: The point was that Bill said then that his thought process

was primarily visual and pictorial rather than verbal, and mine was primarily verbal. I was always astounded by that actually. When interrogated he says that he doesn't even have the pictures sometimes. And that you can turn it off or turn it on.

Burroughs: Yes, it's no problem to make your mind as blank as a plate. It's simply a question of sufficient knowledge, obviously. If you understand your brain mechanism fully you can say, "turn off the words." Very simple. It's a tape recorder, anyway. Yes, Korzybski used to come in and slap a chair saying, "Whatever this is, it's not a chair." That is, it's not the verbal label "chair." Another of his great statements was, "You think as much with your big toe as you do with your brain, and probably much more efficiently." These, of course, are Buddhist commonplaces.

Ginsberg: Or are they?

Burroughs: Of course they are.

Rinpoche: Well, I think rather Zennish.

Burroughs: Just suppose we had a machine to wipe out everyone's past conditioning. This is quite possible in terms of present-day technology. So people don't have to do any sort of meditation. They just go to the machines. Their whole past condition, their whole bad karma, is wiped out of their brains. It must have a place in your nervous system through which it manifests itself for it to be manifest in you.

Rinpoche: I think the question is why the nervous system developed in the beginning for it to happen that way.

Whalen: Your nervous system comes out of that lunacy to start with.

Burroughs: Yes. And of course we have a nervous system that is already divided by the two sides of the brain. Gregory Bateson has talked quite a bit about the two sides. I think that's a very, very important point. You talk about compulsive verbalization, but where is it coming from? It's coming from the other side of the brain, perhaps.

Rinpoche: Well, I think the point is, who's the maker of that up there? How does the whole thing happen to be that way? And what kind of mind is going on behind it? Well, it's a question of taking at face value who actually had the brains to assemble such a machine in the beginning.

Burroughs: Have you read Wittgenstein? He says that no proposition can contain itself as data. In other words, the only thing that's not prerecorded is prerecordings themselves.

Ginsberg: Well, do you think given sufficient money you could get a ma-

chine that would resolve problems of echo, of language, of the word, and problems of conditioning?

Burroughs: It's not exactly a question of a machine. It's a question of the interaction between the machine and the individual. We've got machines. We might as well use them. Which isn't to say that you've invalidated the meditative position. But simply that there can be an interaction between that position and shall we say, data provided by machines which would make it much more efficient, much more precise, and also much more available to large numbers of people.

Ginsberg: But in a way acid is that too. As soon as people get their conditioning wiped out, they freak out. So as soon as you've got your conditioning wiped out, as soon as you turn off the machine, you'd walk right out in the street and stop and have a Coke.

Burroughs: Not necessarily. See, you've got a series of tape recorders in your brain, and you know that you can wipe out a recording.

Rinpoche: I think the problem is that you still have the tape recorder in your brain.

Burroughs: Suppose you put a magnet on it and it was wiped out?

Rinpoche: But you still have the tape, empty tape, which is willing to pick new channels. That is always the problem. We can wipe them out, but we still have the machine that's running around willing to respond to all kinds of things.

Burroughs: I was not proposing some very easy way of doing it; I was simply saying that we can use machines, perhaps, to make it more efficient and more available.

Rome: Well, with due respect, some of the earlier metaphors and notions of meditation that you presented about blank mind or getting rid of the sum of past conditioning were a rather static, or decided notion of what meditation is. Whereas I think the tradition of Buddhism is really interested in the process of how it goes on right now, how we handle what is there.

Burroughs: Presumably if you were able to wipe out past conditioning you'd be able to go on from there, wherever you went on to.

Zim: Presumably without wiping it out you'd also be able to go on. Wiping it out is a curious intention.

Burroughs: Most people are not able to wipe out and get beyond their past conditioning. As Bernard Shaw says, "Those who are ignorant of history will suffer its repetition," and that goes as well for any individual.

Zim: But then you're stuck with this question of where this intent to wipe it out comes from. And that still remains.

Burroughs: No, there is no question there at all. It is simply biologically inappropriate to be reacting to past and future dangers, that's all. It is advantageous to be rid of your past conditioning. You don't have to say anymore than that. You take some guy who's been in battle ten years ago and he's still in battle fatigue. He's still reacting to that situation and there can't be anything more biologically disadvantageous than that. And the same thing with people who are reacting at the present time to infantile traumas that happened forty years ago. And they're completely crippled by this. This is very disadvantageous.

Rinpoche: But knowing how to walk and talk and breathe is part of past conditioning. How do you sort those things out?

Burroughs: You don't have to. Walking and talking and breathing are quite advantageous. Reacting to something that happened to you forty years ago is very disadvantageous. The techniques exist whereby that can be wiped right out of the brain. And once its wiped out it's wiped out.

Zim: Then you've swallowed the whole idea of wipe out. That's become another element of conditioning. Let's say you were lucky enough to wipe out your traumatic experience of ten years ago without wiping out knowing how to walk and talk and breathe, and still so what? What do you do then?

Burroughs: What you want to do. "Do what thou wilt. That is the whole of the Law." You find out what you want to do and you do it.

Rome: Are you sure that you're still going to want to do something?

Burroughs: Maybe you'll just have a lot of people who couldn't move at all. So we say, "Well, what the hell. We tried." There's no way of knowing. That is why Rinpoche has spoken about a leap in the dark. You try it, say, "Well, we're going to wipe out the whole past conditioning for these people."

Rome: Now wait a minute, you're going to wipe it out for them or wipe it out for yourself?

Burroughs: Well, I'll be quite content to wipe it out for myself. I would be glad to be the first experimental subject and see what happens. You see, you cannot say, "I will decide ahead of time what will happen if I make a leap in the dark." And you have spoken very much about the leap in the dark, have you not?

Rinpoche: The dark in the sense of having no idea what's going to happen.

Burroughs: It may be good, it may be bad, it may be simply indifferent. Well, I've been talking too much. Let someone else talk for a while.

Rinpoche: Why do you write poetry?

Ginsberg: I took a vow when I was fourteen years old that if I were admitted to Columbia University I would work hard on the salvation of mankind.

Rinpoche: Did you think you were going to be famous?

Ginsberg: That was not the original intention.

Rinpoche: But the second one?

Ginsberg: You know, I don't think I'm going to be famous. I'm already famous, so the future isn't necessarily fame.

Rinpoche: So how did you think poetry would help people?

Ginsberg: If you can make an accurate description of the differences in behavior and changes in your own life and in your own mind, people looking at it see a sample of how somebody else behaves and how somebody else reacts and get some sense of their own changes, the variety of them, the strangeness of them. It's you who learn for other people to understand. You make a graph of the agreements and contradictions.

Rinpoche: Do you think that's going to help society?

Ginsberg: Yes, because you lay down "what oft' was thought but ne'er so well expressed," or never expressed at all.

Burroughs: But Allen, let me say something about your poetry. I mean, the fact that forty years ago if someone had gotten up and sung a song "Everybody's a Little Homosexual" they would have been torn to pieces, particularly in front of college kids who were especially afraid of that. You have created this terrific cultural revolution whereby you can get up and say that, and people will applaud you. I would say that Allen's poetry has been a great force in transforming American society.

Rinpoche: Are you talking, Bill, purely in terms of homosexuality or something else?

Burroughs: Not just homosexuality, but the whole matter of freedom of the word—so that you can say words like "fuck."

Ginsberg: Responsible frankness, or at least an accounting of what's going on, like a core sample.

Rinpoche: So that will just be to help people free themselves from holding back, and culture from holding back?

Ginsberg: No. To help them free themselves for spiritual search, free themselves for dharma also, or even to awakening curiosity and insight.

Rinpoche: Well, you have a lot of faith and hope.

Ginsberg: Well, yes I have. "Devotion is the head of meditation, as is said."

Rinpoche: Oh, my goodness!

Ginsberg: No, it begins with some sense of devotion. I recognize your beauty the same as I recognize my own or anyone else's, and I write about that in my poetry. However you want to define the word *beauty.*

Rinpoche: Are you sure? Are you perfectly certain?

Ginsberg: No, but I do my best.

Rinpoche: That's better.

Ginsberg: Well, that's all I say. I may try to make a record of what goes on as far as I can see it, but there doesn't have to be a record of truths. There only has to be a record of what I thought was true or what I thought about, so it serves as a model for other people who might not be thinking, or might not think you're supposed to think about that, or might not think that there's any reality to such investigations.

Burroughs: If anyone asks me why I write novels, I am but a simple craftsman.

Waldman: A writer writes.

Burroughs: A writer writes, that's the way he makes his living just like a doctor. Any craftsman wants to make money. It's his trade and he has to make money in order to continue to do it.

Rinpoche: Do you regard yourself as a craftsman?

Ginsberg: Sometimes. Other times I regard myself as a bodhisattva or with bodhisattva intentions.

Rinpoche: When was the first time you heard the word *bodhisattva?*

Ginsberg: Oh, 1951 or something. Reading Suzuki.

Rinpoche: What did you think a bodhisattva was like then?

Ginsberg: It reminded me of the fact that I got there on the ferryboat across the Hudson from Hoboken to New York and kneeled down on my knees and prayed that if I got admitted to Columbia University I would save the working class in America.

Rinpoche: Just the working class? Why not the others?

Ginsberg: Well, that was just the beginning. I didn't realize at the time that anybody was suffering, that the trees were suffering, that I was suffering.

Waldman: It's like being a reed, just a simple reed and letting the wind or whatever play on you.

Merwin: The first reason I do any of those things is because I want to.

Whalen: I usually get carried away. I hear some line in my head or see something that attracts my attention or carts me off with it temporarily and I get it all on paper somehow, maybe not all at once, maybe several days later. But it's an obsessive kind of business. I can't really say that I create these things, that I sit down with the intention of saying, "Now, today is Friday and it's poem writing time," and I get out this paper and pencil and say, "Now I'm going to think of a sublime thought," and presently the sublime thought appears and I say, "The moon is rising over the purple hills." This is a sublime statement of my sublime thought and you got poetry. With me it doesn't work that way. Sometimes I get turned on by a single word or by a phrase or by something somebody says on the bus or maybe I'll be reading something that suggests something else to me, and I take off and start writing my own thing at that point. It isn't so much a business of my being a professional poet or something or of my seeing myself that way, but just being interested in words and language and having a great deal of fun with it.

Rinpoche: Do you memorize your poems of the past?

Whalen: No. I can't remember. I have to write them down. And then after I write them down I can't remember them.

Waldman: You're freed once you write them down.

Whalen: In a way. Sometimes on rare occasions I can remember fragments but if someone tells me, "Please recite one of your poems for us," I can't do it. I have to go find a book and look in the book and read. Allen used to be able to remember lots of his poetry and Gregory could remember his and Kerouac could remember long passages of his own writing and recite them for you. And I always envied Allen's capacity to remember classical poetry, to remember large sections of Shakespeare and Milton, Blake and so on, which I can't do. My memory is too shaky or something.

Rinpoche: How do you feel your practice connects with the poetry?

Whalen: Oh, it stops it. At first, in the earlier part of doing formal zazen—the first year and a half, two years—I wrote very little and I resented—very deeply resented—the fact that I wasn't writing anything, and it made a great difficulty for me. It was only about six months or so ago that I started to feel free enough to write or not write.

Rinpoche: Do you find any conflict between writing poetry and sitting?

Whalen: You know, in some subliminal way that I can't really describe. It's gradually working itself out to where I can write if I have something to write and if not, not. It all works itself out without my having to worry about it, mess with it.

Rinpoche: Do you write about sitting practice in poetry?

Whalen: Oh, no. I couldn't. It's too large. It's too complicated. After I'd been through a sesshin I thought, my goodness, that to explain what had happened to me in those seven days would take thirty-five or forty volumes of closely printed pages, and then you'd still just have books, you still wouldn't have anything like what it was that I pushed myself through. So it doesn't work, or at least I haven't found a way of telling that or telling what it's like to be in the training period at Tassajara where your life is totally changed, where in addition to doing lots of zazen you do all three meals a day in the zendo with the bowls, plus working, plus changing out of working clothes into robes and back again and things like that, and it's very funny. I still have found no way of saying it except to tell people that they ought to try it.

Ginsberg: I'm not as deeply into practice as you are but what will I do? Some things stand out, like anything you can remember stands out. So what little you can remember is material in a sense.

Rinpoche: You wrote a lot of poems when you were at the seminary?

Ginsberg: Yes, I wrote a lot of good poems, I thought.

Rinpoche: Maybe that was your only thought, a time to write poetry.

Ginsberg: No, it wasn't my primary thought. Thoughts came. Occasionally they were tempting enough to write down. They were solid enough, pretty enough to write down.

Rinpoche: Yes, I think a lot of Tibetan poets like Milarepa are spiritually moved out of the sitting practice. All kinds of things come up which they jot down, just write, just sing happily or sadly or whatever it may be and poems get written down. It's worth trying.

Ginsberg: Yes, it would seem natural. The only conflict I would find was whether or not to break up the sitting to write. I did it once, but anything strong enough to write down remained after sitting.

Rinpoche: Well, you could do it while you were sitting on the toilet or something.

Burroughs: I don't see any reason why you can't sit at the typewriter.

Waldman: Gertrude Stein used to meditate at the typewriter.

Fields: Rinpoche, during retreat you instruct your students not to write, why is this?

Rinpoche: Well, when you sit meditation a lot of things churn up your mind—resentment of the past and your mother, your father, your teacher, your brothers, sisters, and dharma or blood brothers or whatever.

Burroughs: Doesn't all that come up when you're writing?

Rinpoche: Not necessarily. There could be a moment of very clear thought when you can actually write something without thinking.

Burroughs: I'd like very much to go on one of these month retreats to cut off all input.

Rinpoche: Let's do that.

Burroughs: But I would like to have a typewriter.

Rinpoche: Well, a typewriter becomes an out for us. It becomes your occupation; that's the only source of entertainment.

Ginsberg: Yes, but he's also saying the typewriter, the use of typewriters, is his zafu, that's his yoga. Is that possible?

Rinpoche: It's possible, of course, but it's very deceptive.

Whalen: Or you could take the ribbon out.

Ginsberg: Well, it's a practical proposition. I wonder would there be room for Bill at Karmê Chöling?

Rinpoche: There's no room for him to type in a retreat hut. There's only room when he comes down. He can do that, which is an entirely different situation. I think that if you're able to preserve your creative mind even when you're in a transitional period, then you are already there. You can write. But there was a woman who did her whole book in retreat, which was jammed with all kinds of resentment, all kinds of sexual fantasies, and all kinds of political ideas.

Burroughs: Well, sexual fantasies are bound to arise in retreat.

Rinpoche: Sure, that's not regarded as bad, but if you have writing materials available on the spot of your sitting practice, then it's just more garbage. There's so much happening you don't have a chance while you're sitting to review anything that's happened to you before.

Rome: Why does it make sense to you to limit your input but not your output?

Burroughs: I didn't say that at all. I simply said that if I was on retreat I would rather like to have a typewriter in case anything useful came up.

Rome: But I think that's the point, that we give up judging anything useful in the process of doing retreat, being in meditation.

Burroughs: That seems quite reasonable.

Rinpoche: Sitting practice is regarded as an unproductive period. You don't produce any commercialized industry of any kind at all. Just sit and do it, slow the world. The world doesn't have any further ideas or input in it at all. This is very hard in some sense, but I think in the long run it provides more input.

Burroughs: In other words you're simply cutting out your input. No mail, no radio, no nothing.

Rinpoche: No telephone.

Burroughs: I could do that in New York City, rip out my telephones and say, "I'm in retreat, boys. Nobody contacts me."

Waldman: I've got some problems with some of the students here at the Poetics Academy coming to classes and saying that they can't write because they're so involved with their meditation, which is fine.

Burroughs: Why do you say that when someone is in retreat, they can't also write?

Waldman: It's just a temporary cutoff.

Burroughs: But suppose in retreat they get an idea for a great novel?

Waldman: It'll come back later if it's that great.

Burroughs: But it may not though.

Rinpoche: The point is that we may have good ideas but we are uncertain as to which part is the real inspiration and which part is just entertainment. You would like to prove to yourself that you have something happening. If you have real inspiration it's going to last.

Burroughs: It may not last, it may not last. You may have something just beautiful and you'll never remember it later. Like Coleridge forgot the end of "Kubla Khan" because someone came in.

Rinpoche: It doesn't mean that we give up ever judging anything useful or useless. But for that situation we are willing to try doing that. It is difficult to sort out what is real production, and what is just part of your fantasy. Usually your mind becomes so clear, so precise that you need some more feedback. The result is that you put in a lot of neurosis and entertainment. This usually happens with people.

Waldman: I think there are exceptions.

Burroughs: It depends on how neurotic you are to start with.

Rinpoche: Well, it's possible that if I decided to send you to retreat, sir, maybe I would like to give you a typewriter.

Whalen: The thing is that if you have one good idea the chances are that you'll have another one later. You lose the first one, well you get another one anyway, so why sweat?

Rinpoche: Yes, good Buddhist thinking.

Burroughs: It's not always true. You may get a good idea and lose it completely. This great novel is gone because you didn't have a typewriter.

Rinpoche: The painters would have a brush. And the seamstresses would have their needles and thread. And all kinds of things begin to happen. And maybe the master chef who's in retreat would like to have his food and cook delicious meals.

Burroughs: This would apply, of course, to any other profession. You've got someone up there on retreat. He's a carpenter. He shouldn't do any carpentry. You've got someone up there, a physicist. Suppose he's got a new field theory, something comes into him. He should not write this down?

Rinpoche: No.

Burroughs: I'm glad you're giving me definite answers.

Rinpoche: Maybe we shouldn't give you a typewriter when you go on retreat.

Burroughs: I think it'd probably be very good for me not to have a typewriter, really. It's like a film director who doesn't have a camera, right?

Rinpoche: Very much so.

Burroughs: I think it's a very good exercise. I agree 100 percent, because the guy's going to be up there saying, "Oh my god, I've got the film, I've got the novel," then he realizes this is not so important.

Rinpoche: Sure. That always happens, and usually people who practice sitting are very brilliant people. They would like to do this thing. They come up with these fantastic ideas. The whole thing may be dissolved, or the remaining ideas may be continued after they get out of this, when they have some taste of the world and a flavor of the sitting practice.

Burroughs: I think your point is very well taken here, very valid.

Rinpoche: If you want to take a retreat you're always welcome.

Burroughs: I'm willing. I've written enough. I don't have to write any-

more. Any profession can become compulsive. I think to break it completely is very good exercise.

Rinpoche: Yeah. I would say more of a training, not even exercise. There is a difference.

Rinpoche: Well, why do you write poetry?

Waldman: I don't know. I feel driven. And I feel calm with it and comfortable, healthy, sane. Some kind of discipline which hasn't interfered in other ways.

Rinpoche: Do you feel any kind of feelings toward your audience when you write?

Waldman: Sometimes when I read or when something comes spontaneously, I feel that the audience is somehow part of it, and feeding it. We're all doing it together and that feels healthy. On the other hand I feel, as William was saying, professional in some way. I mean that's what I do, I write.

Rinpoche: Well, poets generally have some vision of society. They are putting some kind of energy into the society. So what is your work actually doing for the good of society? So somebody buys your booklet of poetry. What do you expect of them?

Waldman: I don't think about it too much.

Rinpoche: You don't? Really you don't?

Waldman: I've been lucky as far as a career in poetry is concerned. I think it has to do with being female at this time and other considerations. Publishers like to put photos on covers and so on.

Rinpoche: Some of your poems are very powerful. They always enter my dreams.

Waldman: Thank you.

Rinpoche: Always, I keep on hearing your voice.

Burroughs: You write poetry. Do you think of your audience when you write?

Rinpoche: Sometimes I do when I write. Sometimes I have a separate sort of split, I should say; I'm writing for this particular person, a love poem or whatever it may be. But at the same time as the audience would hear this, they might pick up some kind of spark. And I think it's the same when I give a talk. I'm talking with an individual person in the audience while this particular talk is being taped and going to be played on the radio, so I have an awareness of that at the same time. So what I expect out of my work is that people will pay attention and they will

think twice. In fact, this is exactly what is happening right now, because we're being taped. We have to make our tape not just a pile of shit but somewhat workable so we can use it again and people will have some idea as to who we are, what we are, and what we are trying to do.

Waldman: I also feel part of some lineage. So that when I read certain poems I'm inspired to continue in some way, or translate again through my own instrument.

Merwin: For me the two things are almost the same because it's entirely a matter of recognition. I mean, the reason I love to do it is because the excitement, the feeling that one recognizes something in terms of language, is for me a great, great excitement. When it happens you don't question it. Part of that faith is that the recognition is something that can be shared, it's something that language is there to pass on to other people.

Rinpoche: Well, I think that's quite safe to say and all of us are dealing with some kind of awareness of a public. Somebody's going to respond to this. It's not just purely writing in your backyard and putting it in the garbage, but there is some sense of awareness which you try to communicate.

Waldman: Basically, you're communicating with yourself at first.

Rinpoche: Sure, that's why you want to write, or you have nothing to write.

Ginsberg: There is a funny line in Shakespeare, "One touch of nature . . .

Waldman and Burroughs: ". . . makes the whole world kin."

Ginsberg: So one touch of one's own nature written down, and other people see their own nature. The primary preoccupation is the bemusement with discovering what you were actually thinking.

Rinpoche: Well, we could draw another line on this, if I may say so. Please criticize me. Everybody's aware of the audience somewhat, but at the same time it depends on how much you want to put out and how much you make yourself heard. There is that kind of arrogance and pride and craftsmanship that working with words is involved with. Is that possible? I mean all of us.

Waldman: I think that seems more true recently.

Rinpoche: Particularly when you're well known.

Waldman: It's only in the last ten to fifteen years that one has been able to give poetry readings and have some sort of audience there.

Merwin: But there's a danger in it, too. I think being aware of readers and being aware of the public are two different things. The image of the poet which comes out of his writing is very often practically eclipsed by trying to make a sort of public relations image out of it.

Rinpoche: If you criticize the government or if you talk about homosexuality or whatever, it would be a real statement on your part, something you take pride in.

Ginsberg: What takes pride in mirroring what went past?

Rinpoche: Well, that still somehow has residue of the coming out.

Ginsberg: Well, I'm confused. Do you feel that this coming out is just pure ego with no value, or do you think it's a useful work that we do.

Rinpoche: Please don't panic.

Ginsberg: I'm not panicking, now will you stop that. I was examining very closely what you were saying. I'm an expert in this area. I know my own moves.

Rinpoche: Well, I'm trying to study the sociological or psychological setup of poets, and how they are aware of the audience. A lot of people begin to deny this completely but it is not quite true. You would like to make a proclamation. People write me a poem sometimes. They say, "Please destroy this after you have seen it." But they really didn't want it to be destroyed.

Waldman: I asked my class for the next time to bring poems that they would be willing to give away. There would be only one copy of them and they would give them to each other.

Rinpoche: So there are two split mentalities taking place.

Waldman: Or even more than that. Some people are concerned with language and using other people's words, like the cut-up method, and putting them in surprising orders so that one isn't even conscious of doing it.

Rinpoche: But that's the same thing somehow. You are still writing poetry.

Ginsberg: However, I don't understand why you're making a difference between the self and the audience, because it is all self.

Rinpoche: Well, that has always been the question of the past.

Ginsberg: Yes, well, I don't think it should be anymore.

Rinpoche: No, we can't just make it a very simple situation that way. You are the audience, and the audience is you, obviously. That's a kind

of cliché. Nevertheless, when you begin to write poetry you would like to proclaim your poems, say something. You have your booklets printed. You have the things that you would like to write down and say—say to yourself.

Waldman: That's not the motive.

Ginsberg: It's not so much proclaim as allow, give permission for the self to understand itself.

Rinpoche: Whatever you use it doesn't really matter, it's the same thing. Like the poem on how you were mugged in New York City. That was a proclamation, as well as an experiential description, which is saying the same thing.

Ginsberg: What is the meaning of the word *proclamation?* I'm afraid you're going to say there's a shade of aggression in the proclamation which is not useful.

Rinpoche: Not necessarily as such, but it's possible there is proclamation in the sense that you are going to say your particular line.

Ginsberg: Right.

Rinpoche: And your particular approach is apt, and that's your style. You are already a poet or maybe somebody's not a poet really, somebody is an amateur, but would like to be a poet or known as a poet. There is the faint hope that you might have your particular platform/pedestal. Anybody who writes poetry seems to feel that addressing from the platform or pedestal is taking place always. Nobody writes poetry just simply for its own sake.

Waldman: I don't think that's true.

Ginsberg: I don't agree with you.

Rinpoche: I'm sure a lot of people don't, but please criticize me.

Ginsberg: There's another way which I find. See, I'm public—

Rinpoche: You see, that's what I said, how else can you write poems?

Ginsberg: The other way is just oddly surprising yourself with remembering something with no actual reference to public.

Whalen: You remember it in words, that's the important thing. You've started to remember before you've judged whether you're doing it for an audience or for yourself. The recognition happens before you think why you're doing it. So that the element of proclamation comes afterward, if it comes at all.

Ginsberg: The way you read it, maybe.

Rinpoche: Well, not quite, but you have hopes of hearing your voice in the back of your mind.

Waldman: But that's modern. In tribal societies there was always a place for the poet shaman, shamaness, whatever, who spoke, who had a role, just like being the head of the tribe, the warrior, the one who went out and made war, the agriculture man or woman, and there was no problem then.

Ginsberg: Well, oddly enough, it's very similar. I spent time with the Australian aboriginal stone men. They had to remember the migration of the tribe over twenty year periods, and all the water holes, and all the lizards, and where they find food. The poet now has to remember that psychologically for a larger culture, like water holes of the mind.

Zim: Why sidestep the possibility that the writing is in fact at least partially aggressive?

Ginsberg: Get on with the business. Don't get hung up on your ego. That kind of self-consciousness inhibits you from seeing what's outside of you. Most exhibitions of that kind of thought-form are just worry and self-consciousness. So you deal with it, like you do meditation or anything.

Waldman: In my experience, hearing poetry read and reading poetry, especially hearing poetry read—it could be in a living room with twenty people—there is usually something very modest. It's not somebody up there giving you a line or giving you some propaganda, or trying to sell you something. It's a very naked kind of sharing and can be illuminating if you're listening to it. And I think there are a lot of poets doing that. There are hundreds of poets who are not in this room, working in very modest ways, not trying to lay their trip on anybody.

Burroughs: A prose writer is doing a very different thing. Essentially he is creating characters, he is performing the great sacrilege in the Mohammedan religion of creating mind. People ask me, "Would you continue to write if you were on a desert island and no one would ever see it?" Answer: "Yes, for company." I would be creating characters for my own company, my own amusement. It's not the same operation as poetry. Also, a prose writer is trying to create a universe which he wants to live in, a whole universe.

Whalen: In both of the novels I wrote it was creating universes to show why I didn't want to live there. Why I wanted out.

Burroughs: If you're creating a universe in which you don't want to live, you're creating one in which you do want to live. It is exactly the same operation.

Rinpoche: You are still aiming at the audience and what they would like to hear.

Burroughs: I'm aiming really to a very definite audience. Say if I'm creating a character, I am aiming to the person who would be that character. I want the character that I have made to read this.

Rinpoche: When I wrote my first autobiography I was aware of the audience as well as telling my own story at the same time.

Whalen: But the business of creating a character by jimmying what you know, taking pieces of experience and gluing them together to make a character, is very exciting and very interesting. You figure that by the time you get through doing this nobody's going to recognize all the pieces. They'll just see the single image or person in the book. And it's a lot of fun.

Ginsberg: I think that's a very important point. You remember it and then you remember you're a poet so you write it down.

Merwin: I think there's another thing in it too. The audience is more a part of the language than it is part of your impulse. Consequently it's part of your indebtedness because once you start using words you're using something that's given to you by other people.

Rinpoche: That's it. If you begin to dissect that particular impulse into two parts you're aware of the audience and you're aware of yourself. Whenever you use language you always address somebody.

Burroughs: You don't think of the audience when you're writing. You think of perhaps an individual audience. For example, when Conrad wrote *Lord Jim* he had no idea that his hero would be taken up by Fitzgerald and become *The Great Gatsby*. They're the same person, the same person that can only exist in the prose of the writer. Therefore no movies can be made of *Lord Jim* or of *The Great Gatsby* because they only have this vicarious existence in the prose of the writer.

Rinpoche: Maybe we should get together some kind of reading. If you could say things about what you have written already and what kind of personal experience you have felt each time. This would be very helpful to people who are going to listen to us. A lot of people who are going to listen to us feel that they need direction, they need inspiration, they're fascinated by who we are, what we are, what is poetics in any case, what it does to this society.

Ginsberg: I have a song I would like to sing.

Rinpoche: Well, maybe you can explain why you sing, then read.

Ginsberg: Yes. I came back from India in 1963 and was chanting Hare Krishna. Robert Duncan, a poet who is a friend, said, "You use more of your body and more of yourself when you're singing Hare Krishna than in your poetry these days." So I began getting more and more pleasure out of singing, and also more and more of my body into it, and more of my breath into it. Then when you and I met seven years later you suggested improvisation and I found it was easiest to improvise while singing. In America that's the basic way of improvising in blues or in calypso. You can use rhymes, make up spontaneous mind utterances very swiftly if you're singing and also more feeling comes out.

Rinpoche: Would you like to compose a spontaneous poem?

Ginsberg: (*singing*)

Started doing my prostrations sometime February '75
Began flying as if I were alive
In a long transmission consciousness felt quite good and
  true
But then I got into a sweat while thinkin' about you
Fell down with bronchitis, the first illness that came
Pneumonia in the hospital was what they said was the name
Came back to New York, got down again on my knees
But then the cold came back and I began to sneeze
I went to see the doctor, I said, "Doctor, something's
  wrong—
Everytime I do my prayers my cold comes along.
Hey Doctor! Look me over, tell me what's wrong with
  me."
He said "Well, I think you've got some trouble with your
  prostate, it might cancer be.
Why don't you get to a urologist, he'll stick his finger up
  your ass.
He'll tell you if it's benign or whether it is something that
  will pass."
The urologist said "You have to go into a hospital, son."
I said "Okay, I'll find out if my race is over and done."
Went into the hospital, unconscious on the table.
They did their systescopic biopsy scientific as they were
  able.

When I woke up, they said "Oh, nothing's wrong with you.
Might as well go home tomorrow, your body is true blue.
Take this antibiotic with you when you go to your house."
Three days I lay in bed thinkin', "Well, I didn't louse
Up my situation too bad, so I'll take the pills they gave.
Couple days of taking those antibiotics I thought I'd see my
grave.
103 was the temperature, I called the doctor please
"Oh!" the nurse said, "The Doctor, he's out there on
vacation taking his ease,
"Why don't you go into the hospital," the substitute doctor
said.
Thought I'd better do it before I fell down dead.
Went into the hospital, they stuck a needle in my arm.
Poured more antibiotic into me, they thought it'd do no
harm.
Pretty soon my face fell down, the virus hit my nerves.
I couldn't drink my water without the drops would swerve
And fall down from my lips. I couldn't move my eyebrows,
Couldn't sneeze for several weeks, I didn't even know how
To wrinkle my nose or smile on the right side of my face.
Till I found it was the same herpes simplex that John Baker
had a case.
In other words I'd been better off if I'd not gone to that
doctor man
As it was I had four weeks of a great big blank quite bland.
Couldn't do no prostrations, couldn't even visualize my
face,
But the one thing I could remember was only you, dear Mr.
Grace.

Rinpoche: Very Jewish. So, Merwin, you want to read us something?

Ginsberg: Have you written any poems since you've been here in Boulder?

Merwin: Yes.

Ginsberg: Do you write every day?

Merwin: I try to write every day. Usually mornings. There's a very short one I wrote after sitting today. I remember it. It's part of a series.

Blanket flower has opened.
I have imagined a heart that lit up the whole sky.

Burroughs: Have you ever written prose as I mean it?

Rinpoche: I think I have, but I don't have it with me. . . . Say something.

Whalen: Frightened chrysanthemums.

Burroughs: What frightened them?

Whalen: I have no idea. What do I want to say?

Rinpoche: That's not the point. Just say it.

Ginsberg: What's going on in your head?

Whalen: I'd seen the crick with the bridge over it that I was walking across today. That's all, just the water running under the bridge, and there's a lot of it.

Ginsberg: What's on the side of the water?

Whalen: Grass. Then I went and sat in the park and looked at the light in the trees. I was on my way to see Chögyam Trungpa and I was too early and so I was sitting and I was looking at the light in the trees and the sun was going down and it came straight across into all the leaves and you could see each one of them and the water was going by. There were two little boys who came along and played in the drinking fountain, trying to scoop the water out of the basin of the fountain. Then they got into putting their thumbs on top of the water spout and spraying water all over everything. They had a good time. On the way back there were some girls wearing some kind of club sweaters. The sweaters had a big *L* that went down into a V shape, but the word that was written on them had *L*'s in it so that's why I knew it was an *L* and not a *V*. They were standing outside of Tico's dining room and the wind blew. What more? I don't have that kind of head.

Ginsberg: Actually, it sounded like one of your poems. You have the whole city going in your mind, plus the river going through it.

Burroughs: May I ask you now a spiritual question? Is it true that when you see something absolutely it disappears? I remember reading in one of your books about this bodhisattva or enlightened one who comes back to his room and finds all the demons there. They say, "We will not go away until you see us."

Rinpoche: That's true, I think, very much so.

Waldman: Is that true of writing?

Burroughs: No, this has nothing to do with writing, exactly. You simply have to see a demon and he disappears.

Rinpoche: Well, it depends on how you see. Unless you see them completely they don't disappear.

Burroughs: What do you think about death? Do you think that it's possible to experience death consciously so that you die consciously or is there always the blackout?

Rinpoche: I think that it's possible to die consciously, definitely.

Burroughs: I agree with you. And how many people can accomplish this?

Rinpoche: Very few.

Burroughs: Yes, as I've always said, if someone's not afraid of dying, they will never die.

Rinpoche: Well, they will die, but . . .

Burroughs: It's the fear, it's the fear that makes the blackout. Let me just ask one more question. Isn't the basic fear that everyone has and carries through their life the fear of their own death which they know is going to happen? Like in *Anna Karenina* where the woman had this continual dream of her own death.

Rinpoche: I think that it's certain death of the world that you experience when you die. It's not only you who's dying but your world's going to collapse and not exist anymore.

Poetics

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche: We've been talking a lot about the notion of threefold logic . . . The notion of what's called threefold logic applies to one's general state of mind, how we experience our phenomenal world. And obviously poetry comes from an expression of one's phenomenal world, in the written form. It could be prose or poetry form. It's not so much, from a Buddhist point of view, that you write good poetry, particularly, but how your thought patterns become elegant; that you see the phenomenal world as a process, stages, as a view, from our own state of mind. So threefold logic is: first, we have what's known as the "ground," which is our perception and is a general sense of idea of how things work. Like "bright." Having seen the brightness, then we begin to have some idea it is "sunshine." So, because of the sense of brightness, then we experience the sense of "sunshine." Having experienced that second stage, then we have a conclusion, which is "dispels darkness."

So that is what's known as threefold logic, which actually does play very much in the haiku approach. There's an idea, and then there's a complementary remark with the idea, and then the final ending. Sometimes the end is punctuated by humor, or by opinion, or it could be just open-ended. So this seems to be an interesting kind of training, seeing how you think when you look at your world, and then you just write that down. By doing this a person begins to become aware, methodical, and so nothing is jumpy, and everything's somewhat organized in your mind. Therefore it creates further chain reactions, probably in the readers of your poetry as well. The thought patterns of those who read your work begin to have a systematic situation around them, rather than just things jumbled together. In turn, the theory is that, having such ap-

proach, you're helping in the world to destroy chaos. And you create order in the universe.

Allen Ginsberg: Well, in your thought process are you systematically checking out the sequence of thought-forms, if the previous thought was ground or flash? At what moment do you recognize the *conception* of a flash as "sun"? In other words, do you constantly examine your thought-forms as threefold process? Or is it only when you have a "striking" thought that you try to analyze it?

Trungpa Rinpoche: Thought patterns are threefold thought patterns which usually involve a threefold process. It's just another afterthought on that natural process.

You could compose haikus consciously as a training process. Then slowly the person begins to get more confidence in themselves and they actually begin to flow . . . Buddhist students also connect with the study of Madhyamaka, the study of threefold logic. You have a case, and the reference coming out of the case and final conclusion—all are the same threefold process . . . You could say "mind is empty: free from conceptions, it is enlightenment."

Allen Ginsberg: In any case, the threefold pattern would be the basic structure of almost all noticings?

Trungpa Rinpoche: And there could be some discipline that goes with that. Training people.

David Rome: Well, that kind of threefold process is not a gimmick, it's a very basic pattern by which perception occurs and also by which creation occurs. So, your finished poem might actually show those three levels. Or it might not all that specifically. But nevertheless, the process which you went through to create a poem must—it does anyhow—follow that kind of process, but the extent to which you're somewhat clear in following it will affect the elegance or accuracy of the poem. So, you have some kinds of first impulse to express something, and that impulse carries with it some sense of the texture of what you want to express, in some cases, particularly for poets, it's one detail that has struck you. You feel that there's something further that could be made of that or presented from that, or even just trying to present that one detail involves some further process. Then, you begin "fleshing it out," so to speak, which is finding a further reference to that detail, or that basic texture. That process contains openness as well as narrowing, which I think is what becomes very important about these three steps. They are

how to do something without having it all figured out to begin with, but, on the other hand, not going off in every direction so that you end up purely with chaos or jumble. So, your middle stage is feeling that texture further, or drawing that detail out further, making new discoveries, but also being able to focus it down toward some kind of single statement, single message. That becomes the third level, which could be contained in a great last line, or it might even be contained in that kind of space that's left after the poem is over. There's some unified event which is actually taking place.

Allen Ginsberg: How would that apply to the last haiku?

> A wild sea
> and stretching across to the Isle of Sado
> the Milky Way.

Trungpa Rinpoche: I think that hangs together as threefold process. You have a sense of "waterness" . . . you have a sense of nostalgia—the island, dwelling place . . . And then sort of "so what"—the Milky Way.

Student: Could you explain the connection between poetry and right speech—since right speech is one of the paths.

Trungpa Rinpoche: There are a lot of connections. We hear stories of Buddha that when he gave sermons to people—even though they had psychological blockages—they couldn't help but listen to him, and once they listened, it began to make sense. And when it made sense to them, that was helping to liberate them. I think this is our goal, in some sense—to develop a kind of logic version. There has to be some kind of motivation, at least to create order in the universe—by means of speech, poetry—this is our objective, actually, all together.

Tibetan Poetics

Rinpoche: My approach to writing poetry in the Tibetan language is to try to use the classical Tibetan format, without the classical Indian influence—the Tibetans' own poetry, the Tibetans' own language. I am trying to use the spoken language, the colloquial language of modern Tibetan in such a way as to create a surprise for new generations of Tibetans so that they also can compose poetry according to their own vision rather than having to stick to a format. Some of my Tibetan poems have been translated into English. In my English-language poetry, I've been working on improvising.

Ginsberg: Is improvising a part of traditional Tibetan poetic practice?

Rinpoche: Well, actually, the whole thing is divided into two types. We have very stuffy poetry in the Tibetan tradition, which uses all kinds of synonyms instead of real names. The sun is referred to as "He who has seven horses for his chariot." Things like that. That kind of poetry follows the Indian school and tends to use themes from the *Mahabharata* and other myths and stories. It's very technical, in fact. So that's what's actually known as poetry. The Tibetan word for poetry is *nyen-ngag,* which means "beautiful sound" or "beautiful utterance" or "beautiful voice."

Then there are the songs which are much closer to Western poetry actually, like the songs of Milarepa and other inspirational songs which are called nyamgur. These correspond to doha in the Indian traditions. These are usually spoken on the spot by a master, and students take down notes. Or else they are written down by the master, but still they are composed on the spot, without conforming to a particular strain of the Indian tradition. This is a spontaneous way which seems to be more apt and accurate.

Ginsberg: Did the doha type, the "utterance," use colloquial language?

Rinpoche: It depends on the period, as well as on how free and brave the poet was or is. Milarepa, for example, spoke almost illiterately; not like an educated person, but like a peasant or a farmer. Milarepa's poems are not regarded as academically correct; that is, they do not conform to the conventions of Indian poetry. They are on a level of folk song which arouses people's minds, so therefore they are the most immediate and impression-making poems that can be written. My lineage in particular, the Kagyü lineage, has been working on that kind of poetry. And so we have people in the lineage composing such poems constantly, working from personal experience rather than trying to stick with the Indian format. It's a kind of free expression that has developed.

Waldman: So there's no spiritual transmission in the poetry—

Rinpoche: Some of the spiritual teachers, like the Eighth Karmapa who was a holder of the Kagyü lineage, were great scholars in the traditional Indian poetry. But when they sang songs of their own experience, they dropped the format. They just spoke out ordinarily. But if they had to send a formal letter to the king, or the Dalai Lama, they would usually start and end with the formal poetry of the Indian tradition. The folk poetry that exists in Tibet is usually not regarded as poetry but is regarded as folk song. They don't exactly go to music but there's some melodic rhythm involved. They express the mood of a particular day, a particular year, or a particular political era. Actually, the colloquialness has a very blunt and sincere and slightly stupid quality about it which is very beautiful when you mix that with the inspiration of Buddhist meditation. Then the whole thing becomes very real.

Waldman: By stupid, you mean sort of awkward, straight from the mind?

Rinpoche: Yes, kind of blunt and too sincere. If you use 100 percent that kind of language, it becomes too naive.

Ginsberg: So what kind of form do you use when you are writing in Tibetan? Do you rely on fixed forms and stanzas?

Rinpoche: Lately I've been trying fixed lines with eighteen syllables which is the classical tradition. Nobody these days writes eighteen-syllable lines. There is also the seven-syllable line, which is popular and common in the folk poetry. The traditional nyen-ngag is based on nine syllables. Milarepa's songs are in nine-syllable lines. The nine-syllable line can be given different stress points which express some sense of

immediacy. The seven-syllable lines are still more immediate. They express emotions more because there is no time or opportunity to use too many words. They have to be immediate. The nine-syllable lines are more eloquent. You can use metaphor to stretch them out more.

Ginsberg: Do they have any kind of rhyme?

Rinpoche: Occasionally. Occasionally the brilliant ones use puns, which is a mark of enormous courage and accomplishment in poetry. Milarepa says to the logicians, "and I have never cooked the stew of logic." That's how it is translated into English. But in Tibetan, stew is *tsoma* and logic is *tsema,* so "I never cooked the tsoma of tsema."

Ginsberg: When you write in English, what do you carry over?

Rinpoche: Not particularly much. When I write in English there is a problem that might come up since it is not my own language. At the same time I have to speak some kind of message which is always in one's mind. And at the same time, the spontaneity comes through as well. So I just regard the poems that I write in English as finger painting in my mind. Just straightforward.

Waldman: A lot of American poets are working that way as well.

Ginsberg: Still finger painting. I do.

Waldman: And concerned with spontaneity. A lot of reading out loud. Hearing the poetry that way rather than getting it off the page.

Rinpoche: Yes. It seems, if I may raise the point, that in order to be a poet you have to be in some way or other humorous as well as have a tinge of neurosis. Whether that neurosis is related with enlightenment or craziness (where craziness expresses itself in the ideal word) there is some kind of bravery, some kind of eccentricity that seems to be required. Otherwise—

Waldman: Sort of being on the edge, so that you represent both sides of something, which is slightly schizophrenic.

Rinpoche: I think that a poet's mind functions entirely differently, that in some sense you could say that poets are haunted by their poetry, not *their* poetry but the concept of poetry. Each time when you look at the world in a different way—when you take an airplane, when you travel in a train, when you meet cab drivers, when you shop in a grocery—whatever you do, something flashes back to you. There is a kind of fundamental humor and fundamental craziness which constantly gives you lots of material and clarity at the same time.

Ginsberg: Is that humor or craziness, the eyeball of poetry, any different from the humor and craziness of the eyeball of meditation?

Rinpoche: Not at all. But I think in meditation you don't look for material; you just develop awareness, you just sail through. In the case of poetry you are talking to yourself.

Ginsberg: Is there anything really great in ancient Tibetan traditional poetry?

Rinpoche: There was a great poet called Pema Karpo. He was a great scholar and he wrote a whole sadhana following the format of traditional poetry. And once you can see that complete structure, it's fantastic, it's really great. But there's a lot of room for stiffness at the same time. It doesn't make any sense unless you are a poet yourself and can read what is meant. There are so many synonyms and there is so much humor that it is sort of an in-joke kind of thing. There's so many allusions an ordinary layman couldn't follow it all; only a scholar could.

Ginsberg: When did you read that?

Rinpoche: When I was nine.

Ginsberg: Did you get anything out of it?

Rinpoche: I did, actually. I got an enormous kick out of it. Then when I was about thirteen or fourteen, I was influenced by Jigme Lingpa who is the Nyingmapa master. His work is partly nyamgur or doha, and partly poetry at the same time. I tried to imitate his style. Before I left my country I thought I was going to get into the Tibetan national cult. Then as I was escaping from my country, I met a lot of people, ordinary peasants, who had a very strange way of talking. I thought that was very fantastic, so I tuned myself into a new style of poetry which is not formal but still borrows certain classical words in the midst of colloquialism. Which makes it a different thing. As in ivory, you know, you have the ornament of the inlaid jewel.

Visual Dharma

FILM WORKSHOP ON THE TIBETAN BUDDHIST VIEW OF AESTHETICS AND FILMMAKING

THERE ARE A LOT OF presentations of Tibetan Buddhism in the form of books and personal instruction, but very rarely has an attempt been made to present it using the medium of film for teaching as living poetry.

Although there have been films using shots of color paintings and photographs of scenes, these do not particularly portray the evolutionary human quality of Tibetan Buddhism as a native Tibetan has experienced it. This particular film of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* would convey that living quality as direct experience without the outer trappings of ceremony and traditional gestures.

Teaching is not meant to be verbal alone. It is very visual. Since we have the possibility of another dimension, using the great medium of motion pictures, I feel that this could be not only Milarepa's life teaching, but Tibetan Buddhism visualized in its raw and rugged form without the intrusion of psychedelic images and other extraneous material.

The film is not intended to convert people to Tibetan Buddhism. Rather, it will provide virgin territory that is not adulterated by conventional or institutionalized spirituality for anyone with curiosity or a question in mind. I hope that awake people who question their own basic sanity will find another way of looking into their neuroses without necessarily getting just another "answer to their problems."

Milarepa's life as Tibet's great poet-yogi was very colorful and dramatic. It is either black or white; there is no intermediate quality needed.

Starting as an ordinary person, Milerepa just sat in meditation and practiced and attained enlightenment in one lifetime.

The visual effect of Milarepa's life is basically very austere, very spacious, with dots of richness here and there relating to his experiences. The richness is there only to emphasize the austerity around it. The visuals should be very definite, black and white, space and speed at the same time.

For example, the opening sequence of "The Tale of the Red Rock Jewel Valley" picks up at the point Milarepa is longing for Marpa, his guru. There is a sense of desolation. It might be called his adolescent stage because of the feeling that Milarepa misses his "Daddy" and is still looking for reassurance from him. It is a question of something undeveloped but still having some activity. Visually we might work with desert, something completely open, and find one human footprint or maybe the footprint of an animal, a horse, and maybe horseshit.* There could be a snowstorm and at the same time sand is blowing.

The cameramen as well as the director should develop an absolute relationship with sand and storm, not just try to entertain. Just shoot the whole flow of a storm with a wide-angle lens and shoot the sand grains with close-up lenses. In other words, make a thorough study of all the little things that happen. There are lots of things about sand in a storm that we don't know. There is the overall power and the overall vacuum of the storm and there are little details of how each grain of sand gets blown by wind.

Q: Aren't you shooting the sand and storm specifically with regard to the theme of this chapter, not just to see all the different aspects of sand and storm?

Rinpoche: You don't have to. You are not preaching to anybody. We're not trying to con anybody.

Q: I was thinking more of explaining than conning.

R: You don't have to. Explaining is conning. We just take a good look at each grain of sand and each flake of snow and each stone. We don't have to be overcrowded with materials. That's always the problem.

Q: So we just approach it with complete openness, forgetting about Milarepa, forgetting about "The Tale of the Red Rock Jewel Valley"?

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*Originally published as "horse-ship." However, it is likely that Chögyam Trungpa said "horseshit" and this was mistranscribed.—Editor

R: Yes, we get carried away by ourselves.

Q: Have it in the back of our minds?

R: Possibly you'd better not. If you really want to be with the sand and storm properly you should forget all your philosophical, all your educational obligations. You should get really fascinated by sand and storm.

In the next sequence, "The Song of the Snow Ranges," Milarepa is for the first time making friends with himself and with the experiences of silence and desolation. Visually it will be based on working with the different aspects of snow. Whereas a snowstorm is very temperamental, the snow ranges are very sedate, related to the crystal qualities of snow, snow falling down and settling on the ground. We have tremendous possibilities here. I thought we could shoot snow in five different colors, using laboratory techniques. We need highly sensitive closeup lenses to work with snow falling and settling down and melting; how snow relates with stone; how snow relates with wood or leaves; how a snowflake lands on a pine tree or grass or water. Quite possibly we could have snow falling on lenses. Also we can watch the way it melts. There's endless exploration of the snow cult to be made. There's a marvelous section in this Song where Milarepa describes the different types of snow falling down:

> In the mist, snow fell for nine days and nights.
> Then more and more for a further eighteen nights and days.
> The snow fell, big as bags of wool
> Fell like birds flying in the sky
> Fell like a whirling swarm of bees.
> Flakes fell small as a spindle's wheel
> Fell as tiny as bean seed
> Fell like tufts of cotton.
> The snowfall was beyond all measure.
> Snow covered all the mountain and even touched the sky
> Falling through the bushes and weighing down the trees.
> Black mountains became white,
> All the lakes were frozen.
> Clear water congealed beneath the rocks;
> The world became a flat, white plain;
> Hills and valleys were leveled.

The snow was such that even evildoers could not venture
out.
Wild beasts starved and farmyard creatures, too,
Abandoned by the people in the mountains,
Pitiful, hungry, and enfeebled.
In the tree mists famine struck the birds,
While rats and mice hid underground.
In this great disaster I remained in utter solitude.
The falling snow in the year's end blizzard
Fought me, the cotton-clad, high on Snow Mountain.
I fought it as it fell upon me.
Until it turned to drizzle.[1]

Q: How about something different—like in the song, snow falling like bags of wool—actually throw down bags of wool?

R: You must be joking. No, you just wait for it and find out what it looks like and shoot it really close so that it looks huge. It is important to relate snowfall to the overall scene. Snow has composure, dignity, unlike rain which is transparent once it drops.

Q: I think we have a tendency to get complicated. We want to be clever; we want to make something very brilliant so everybody will see how clever we are.

R: That's a problem that usually is embarrassing. The audience knows that you're trying to be clever. They also know that we know that they know. You don't have to do tricks. Just show what you think very simply.

Q: In the first chapter we talked about, it sounded as if people were going to photograph sand and let sand tell them what was happening. Do you want some sort of message for this chapter?

R: The message will be there automatically. The whole philosophy of art is that you don't try to be artistic but you just approach the objects as they are and then the message comes automatically. You do the same thing in Japanese flower arrangements. You don't try to be artistic, you just chop off certain twigs and certain branches which seem to be out of line with the flow. You just cut them off and then you put the twigs

1. From *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa,* translated by Garma C. C. Chang.

there and you put the flowers underneath and it automatically becomes a whole landscape.

When you look at a painting by a great artist it doesn't look like someone actually painted it, but it just seemed to happen by itself. There's no gap, no cracks at all; it's one unit, complete.

The film will continue with Milarepa's various stages of development: becoming an individual, no longer dependent on someone else. Then he begins to speak out. No longer yearning for something, no longer searching, he begins to accept himself as a teacher. His sense of humor begins to develop, reaching the level of "crazy wisdom." He can afford to be crazy and wise at the same time. Finally, we'll reach the "old dog" stage, Milarepa's highest attainment. People can now tread on him, use him as a road, as earth. He is always there in the sense of universality in contrast to mere individuality.

I would like to create this film in such a way that the audience has to take part in it. This means that we need to provide lots of space and lots of speed as well as lots of richness. These three principles, properly interrelated, seem to work together so that the audience begins to take part in the presentation. In other words, they feel they are giving birth to each vision as they watch the screen, rather than passively absorbing some ready-made creation.

Q: Do you mean that when the next image comes on the screen they expect it, that it seems quite natural?

R: No. That's too easy. That's like watching a cops-and-robbers movie where you know that the good guys get saved and the bad guys get killed.

Q: Do you mean a certain amount of tension? Like spaciousness creates the need for speed?

R: Yes, that's the whole point. There should be room to question, not have the whole thing presented to you as though by a machine gun. The audience should take part in it. Space is the most important thing—space and silence. Then you begin to value objects much more.

Q: There is something about being gripped like that. Your breathing changes. It affects you directly and fundamentally.

R: Definitely. It has been said with relation to the maha ati[2] practice that the eyes are one of the most important exits. In fact, they have been

2. Fully awakened state of mind.

called the door of jnana, the highest wisdom. Visual effects are the most important in their effect on the mind.

Q: When you speak of space and silence it sounds a bit like a Chinese or Japanese scroll painting, a landscape where there is all that space and the few objects become very prominent. It seems the principal device to get that feeling is the difference in scale between something very vast and something very small.

R: You have to put that scale into a time situation in a movie, rather than use only a visual effect. Generally an audience comes to see a film with some expectations. When they begin to feel they're not going to see what they expect, it is somewhat strangling.

Q: Do you mean giving the audience pain in a sense? When the tension becomes so painful you can't stand it any more, then you switch, and not until?

R: Well, you can't overplay it. But at the brink of nothing ever happening, something happens—but something quite different from what you expected to see.

Q: As if giving the audience time to make the decision of what will happen next? And with richness you could reward their tension?

R: Exactly. Maybe we'd go very fast then.

Q: Do you see a modern parable in this—for instance, Milarepa's deprivation in his youth as compared to the draft?

R: Once you try to be literal you have no choices. This limits you and you end up having to use psychedelic effects or acting or something like that. We are trying to avoid culture. You might say it is Tibetan culture we are presenting, but we could present it as cultureless culture, new ground, no-man's-land. Audiences find it difficult to relate to anything except human beings. So if we can create a tension without using human beings visually, that would be an incredible challenge. Once you become involved with the stages of human civilization, it has to be labeled twentieth century or nineteenth century or whatever. But if we limit ourselves to animals or objects or nature or thangkas, there are no stages of civilization to relate to.

It should also not be just a documentary with that "educational film" quality, although it should make suggestions. In fact, not giving information is one of the best things we can do to help the audience take part in the film. Once they have been fed, they have nothing else to do but walk

out. But if not enough information is given, although indications are there, then they have to work and think about what has been presented.

Q: Could you go into the soundtrack?

R: Here again we have a tremendous problem of culture. We are going to include the monkey chant or flute or Japanese Kabuki sound. And we need some kind of familiar sound that people can relate to, like an umbilical cord. The narration will be read in English and that will provide a sort of umbilical cord. We'll also have some contemporary singing of Milarepa's songs. That will finally have to dissolve into abstract, cultureless sounds.

Q: When you criticize a film you often say, "It is too aware of the audience." But when people make films, especially in the West, the point is to entertain people.

R: If you are completely confident in yourself you don't have to think about the audience at all. You just do your thing, you just do it properly. This means you become the audience. What you make *is* the entertainment, but that needs a certain amount of wisdom.

When an artist does a painting for commission there is a good likelihood that his painting will be one-sided because he is aware of the audience and he has to relate to the educational standards of the audience. If he presents his own style without reference to the audience, they will begin to react and automatically their sophistication will develop and eventually will reach the level of the artist.

Any entertainment that aspires to art should not work with the audience like an advertisement. Trying to please the audience lowers the level of sophistication constantly. That's what's wrong with the American marketing system. When you try to always please the audience you have to produce more and more automatic things, more and more plastic, so people don't even have to walk out of their rooms to make things work. They just press a button and they get entertained.

You see, we have the responsibility of raising the mentality level of the audience. People might have to reach out with a certain amount of strain but it's worth it. The whole civilization then begins to raise its level of sophistication. It is possible that the first attempt will be a failure. You might not get enough people in the audience to work that way at first, but gradually they will pick it up. That has actually been happening.

The beautiful thing about Buddhism, if I may say so, is that Buddhists

don't try to con you. They just present what they have to say as it is, take it or leave it.

Q: But if you are creating something for a particular audience, isn't it good to be aware of them so that you are creating something for them rather than just for yourself?

R: That is very difficult. If you relate to yourself properly then obviously there are a lot of people like you. In fact, you are the catalyst for the rest of the world. The audience comes to you like to a queen bee. There is less sense of salesmanship or the feeling that you have to con people. Therefore, people will come to you. It is quite possible we might allow too much space and it would not be particularly popular at first. Nobody is going to say "wow, how exciting!" to begin with. It will seem alien at first; one wouldn't know how to relate to the film. But then, when they change gears, when they see it a second time, next week, next month, it will be different.

You see, if you try to con people, to make money immediately, it becomes prostitution. When we try to meet the immediate demands of the public in their present state of sophistication we have to lower our standards constantly. Whereas, if we allow for some kind of resistance to our work, then they have to jump up higher and higher. They have to work with their patience, they have to work with their sophistication, so the public automatically gets educated. You see, it's a plot, but a compassionate plot.

Q: Well, originality always works that way anyway. People first reject it because it is unknown, then they rise to it.

R: Yes, no doubt. People in this country are very awake, they are looking for something. But usually they get the something they expect. Next time they will be able to get something beyond what they are used to.

I would like to discuss the five buddha principles with you, not only in relation to this particular Milarepa film project, but also for general aesthetic appreciation as well as creative work.

We are trying to get at some basic understanding of seeing things in their absolute essence, their own innate nature. We can use this knowledge with regard to painting or poetry or arranging flowers or making films or composing music. It is also connected with the relationships between people. These five buddha principles seem to cover a whole area of new dimensions of perception. They are very important at all levels and in all creative situations.

We won't go through the philosophy; we'll start with the functional qualities of these five principles. It seems they are associated with a sense of composition.

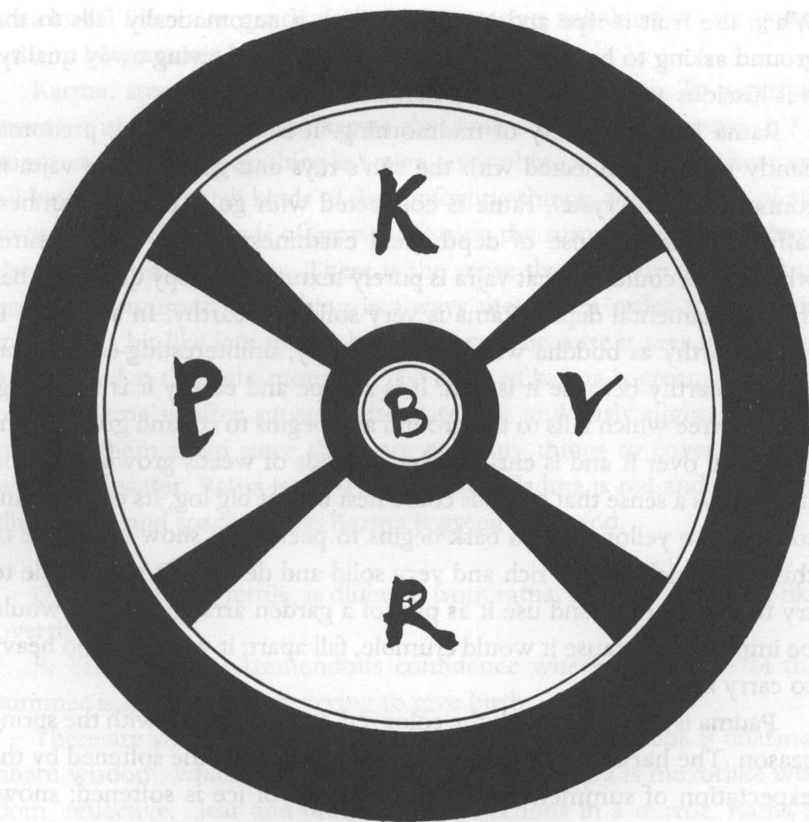
Buddha, being in the middle, is the foundation or the basic ground. But this basic ground is usually rather dull because it is too solid. We have to dig it up and put concrete there or whatever, since it is rather uninteresting as it is. It will be interesting only if we know we are going to construct something on it.

So buddha is in the middle because it is the foundation rather than because it is the most important. Buddha could also be the environment or the oxygen which makes it possible for the other principles to function. It has that sedate, solid quality. In terms of visuals, it is the uninteresting part, the waiting for something to happen. Often the buddha quality is necessary to create the contrast between the other colorful types: vajra, ratna, padma, karma. We need buddha as the moderator, so to speak.

Buddha is somewhat desolate, too spacious. It's like visiting a campsite where only the stones from campfires are left. There's a sense of having been inhabited for a long time, but for the time being no one is there. The inhabitants were not killed; it wasn't a violent move; they just had to leave the place. It's like the caves where the Indians used to live or like the caves in France with the paintings. There is a sense of past but at the same time it has no particular characteristics. It is very dull, quite possibly in the plains, very flat. It is connected with the color blue.

Vajra is the sense of sharpness, the sense of precision. The color of vajra is white. It is cold and desolate because everything has to be analyzed in its own terms. The expression of vajra deals with objects in terms of their own merits. It never leaves any space, never neglects anything. In that sense it seems to be connected with winter. In a lot of Milarepa's songs, vajra is connected with karma activities. Vajra is winter, white, austere, black and white. For example, the ground has its own way of freezing and trees and plants have their own way of freezing. The ground carries the snowfall in a distinctive way. Trees, on the other hand, have an entirely different way of carrying snow, depending on whether leaves have fallen off, or if they are evergreens. Vajra is very cold and desolate but it is sharp and precise. It requires a lot of focusing.

Vajra is the cold and desolate winter landscape. Karma is even more hostile. Ingmar Bergman's movies are very vajra. He gets the all-perva-



Drawing by Chögyam Trungpa of the mandala of the five buddha families: buddha, vajra, ratna, padma, and karma. Buddha, being in the middle of the mandala, is the foundation or basic ground.

FROM "TIBETAN BUDDHISM AND FILMMAKING," *FILMMAKERS NEWSLETTER* (DECEMBER 1972): 31–34. © 1972 BY DIANA J. MUKPO.

sive winter quality, the sharp quality like a winter morning, crystal clear, icicles sharp and precise. It's not completely desolate, there are lots of things to be intrigued by. It's not empty but full of all sorts of thought-provoking sharpness. Vajra is connected with the East, the dawn, the morning. It has those sharp silver qualities, the morning-star quality.

Ratna is related with autumn, fertility, richness—richness in the sense of pure restlessness. Trees must bear fruit to be an orchard, for instance.

When the fruit is ripe and completely rich it automatically falls to the ground asking to be eaten up. Ratna is this kind of giving away quality. It is luscious and extraordinarily rich and open.

Ratna has the quality of midmorning. It is very colorful, predominantly yellow, connected with the sun's rays and gold. Where vajra is connected with crystal, ratna is connected with gold, richness, amber, saffron. It has a sense of depth, real earthiness rather than texture, whereas we could say that vajra is purely texture—a crispy quality rather than fundamental depth. Ratna is very solid and earthy. In a sense it is not as earthy as buddha which is dull-earthy, uninteresting-earthy. But ratna is earthy because it is rich. It is so ripe and earthy it is like a big, gigantic tree which falls to the ground and begins to rot and grow mushrooms all over it and is enriched by all kinds of weeds growing around it. There is a sense that animals could nest in that big log. Its color begins to turn into yellow and its bark begins to peel off to show the inside of this tree which is very rich and very solid and definite. If you decide to try to take it away and use it as part of a garden arrangement, it would be impossible because it would crumble, fall apart; it would be too heavy to carry anyway.

Padma is connected with the color red. It is connected with the spring season. The harshness of winter is just about to become softened by the expectation of summer. Even the harshness of ice is softened; snowflakes.

It is the meeting of the two situations, so it has a halfway-through sense from that point of view, quite unlike autumn which has definite qualities of ripening and developing things. So padma, in that sense, is very much connected with facade. Padma has no feeling of solidness or texture. It is purely concerned with colors, the glamorous qualities. Padma is concerned with output rather than input, with regards to its health or its fundamental survival. Padma is not concerned with a survival mentality at all. Thus it is connected with sunset. The visual quality of reflection is more important than its being, so padma is involved with art rather than science or practicality.

Padma is a reasonable location, a place where wildflowers can grow, a perfect place to have animals roaming about, like a highland plateau in Tibet. It would be lambing season, with lambs prancing about and eating wildflowers. And there are herbs; it is filled with thyme. It is a place of

meadows. There are gentle rocks, not intrusive, suitable for young animals to play among.

Karma, strangely enough, is connected with summer. To a certain extent it is the efficiency of karma that connects it with summer. It's a summer in which everything is active, everything is growing. There are all kinds in insects, all kinds of discomforting things, and all kinds of activity going on, all kinds of growth. During the summer there are thunderstorms and hailstorms. There is the sense that you are never left to enjoy the summer; something is always moving in order to maintain itself. It's a bit like late spring, but it is fertile because it sees that things are fulfilled at the right moment. The color of karma is green. The feeling of karma is after sunset, dusk, late day and early night. Let's go through them again since there are so many things to cover: Vajra is white and water. Ratna is yellow and earth. Padma is red and fire. Buddha is blue and space or sky. Karma is green and wind.

Q: Karma, being fertile, is different from ratna. Ratna is maturity, like overripe.

R: Yes, ratna has tremendous confidence where the karma of the summer is still competing, trying to give birth.

There are wisdoms that go with the five families. Buddha is dharmadhatu wisdom, which is all-encompassing space. Vajra is mirrorlike wisdom, reflective, clear and precise, like reflections in a mirror. Ratna is the wisdom of equanimity which is expansive, extending. Padma is the discriminating wisdom of seeing the details of things. Karma's wisdom is the automatic fulfillment of all actions.

Q: Rinpoche, would you say that these families can be related to useful substances, things that men use? For instance, I was thinking that padma might be drugs and intoxicants, ratna might be food, vajra might be medicine, karma might be tools, buddha might be building materials.

R: Well said. You can make up anything you like once you get the idea of it. That is why we are discussing this so that the cameramen and filmmakers can get into it.

Q: What family is filmmaking? Vajra?

R: Vajra obviously, with a touch of padma. Vajra because it comes from intellectual speculation. You have to have some metaphysical point of view in order to make a film.

We could work with these five principles by looking at one object from

different points of view. We could take a karma scene as a ratna shot, or a padma scene as a buddha shot. If you are willing to explore these principles, the film can have the quality of all these different vibrations.

Often the reason people find a film irritating or repetitive is because the mentality of the filmmaker is seduced by vajra or karma or any one particular principle and the whole thing becomes monotonous. However we can change the structure now. You don't have to feel threatened by exploring unknown areas because every area is a known area.

Q: So a good exercise would be taking one object or one landscape and photographing it from the points of view of the different families?

R: That's what I would like to do. Just pick up a piece of stone or a twig and approach it from its five different aspects. A whole different perspective will begin to develop and then you have limitless resources. You don't feel obliged to produce ever more materials because you can make one thing and make it vajra, karma, padma, ratna, or buddha. You can make all kinds of tartan plaids out of it.

Q: In other words, if you approach any image from one point of view there is a sense of something being left out?

R: It is true if this is your only inspiration because that way you are approaching the whole situation with poverty in mind. Psychologically you are poverty stricken. You received your check yesterday; you spend it all today. For example, the film *El Topo* is a masterpiece in some sense but the whole film consists purely of a collection of highlights: the gaps between them are completely neglected. There is no way of linking them to each other. In that sense it is an expression of poverty.

Q: Is that the absence of buddha?

R: That's right, you're getting it. Most of the good films have a limited quality except, if I may say so, some of the samurai films. This is because they are not so excited by the highlights. They just take advantage of the highlight shots and whenever there is a gap, the gap becomes artful. This is based on some kind of pride or ultimate confidence in the Japanese mind.

For example, if you study with a teacher who acquired his understanding by information alone, that person may tell you very wise things, beautiful things. But at the same time he won't know how to handle the gaps. He blushes or gets embarrassed or he fidgets around between the stories, between the wisdoms that he utters. Whereas if you are dealing with somebody who is completely competent, who is actu-

ally living the information, then the teaching becomes part of the whole being; there is no embarrassment. It goes on and on and on like the waves of an ocean. There is endless richness. You receive a lot but at the same time you don't feel that he emptied out all his information to you. You feel there's much more to be said.

I think this could be the whole approach in a film as well. We put out just a corner of our knowledge instead of saying a lot even though that would make people more comfortable because they would feel more secure.

Q: Do you think people are going to be able to identify the five buddha qualities in the film?

R: No, I don't expect that. But if we are into it completely then it will show. There's no point in presenting the philosophy of the doctrine too precisely. The five buddha principles have a part in it, but this is a kind of yeast that ferments. Just let it develop. If the things are expressive enough then they automatically develop.

Q: When I saw *Seven Samurai* I was impressed by a real human quality, the dignity of human life, the details.

R: To me, *Seven Samurai* was not a particularly good film. Its makers were very much afraid of the audience. They spent tons and tons of energy to impress the public, particularly the Western public. They produced a hypothetical possibility of something good but it was not natural enough. The music wasn't good at all, it was embarrassing, really.

There was one samurai film made by Kurosawa that was fantastic, a very long one that began with Japanese classical music. The theme was "stab him through me." There was one piece of swift swordsmanship where the samurai beheaded his enemy. The enemy was smiling, and when his head landed on the ground it was still smiling, the samurai was that fast. Also, *Woman in the Dunes* was not bad at all.

Q: If one were telling a story, would you begin with one of the five elements and go onto the next? Would there be any kind of ideal structure in terms of the five families?

R: You would probably have to have some handle, and that would depend on the family characteristics your composition begins with. That's what all of us always do. When we introduce ourselves and start to make conversation we come out with one of the family styles.

Q: If you happen to start with, say, padma, would it be ideal to go on with any particular one of the others?

R: You can switch into karma, being aggressive. That might wake people up. Or else you could start with aggression and then go to padma, try to draw people in. You have limitless possibilities.

Q: Or could you weave all of them together?

R: Yes. That's extremely difficult to do, but one can. It's possible anyway.

Q: What prevents the film from being simply a procession of images? What kind of thread is there?

R: That's the point of spending a lot of time on one particular theme. Generally this isn't done because there are all kinds of exciting possibilities that tempt the cameramen and directors and they don't become really involved in what they're doing. They don't cultivate inspiration so the work becomes jumpy. The whole idea of our approach is that if we develop a keen eyesight and use hairbreadth lenses and see how intricate and how rich the objects are, then we look at them one by one and we build up a whole sequence and the pattern automatically develops.

Q: Could you say that the continuity comes from the fact that someone is really doing it, is fully involved?

R: Yes, it's like meditating. You work with one technique for a long, long time and finally the technique falls away. There's some discipline and continuity of stubbornness all the time that you are willing to relate with. Even if the object rejects you or the light isn't right or something else goes wrong, still you go on and do it.

Q: I still have the feeling that it's happening out there, like something happening out the window. That's pure over there, and man is in his dark pit over here. The nature shots inevitably are seen as entertainment.

R: That whole thing is quite interesting. If you present nature with an ideal rhythm—when you get tired of one particular shot then you turn to something else and it goes on and on and on—then it is just like watching television. You are just viewing it. But in this film the scenes will begin to become unpredictable—they just hover around or they go beyond your expectation of space. When they become irritating you begin to panic psychologically—"Will this continue?" Or, "That might not happen." Then you are really taking part in it. You begin to realize that you can't control it, can't have merely predictable entertainment. Then you forget you are looking out of the window, but you are out on the street yourself.

You see, psychologically one has to be very careful and deliberate

about editing. Work with a level of entertainment and then step beyond that level. You don't have to introduce new things at all. Just do more than they expect, so the expectation begins to develop into a type of panic.

Q: Entertainment is an important word in film. In a sense if you don't entertain the audience you don't hold them.

R: When people go to a movie they go because they want a change. They want something to see besides their usual scene of washing dishes, working in their office or whatever. This automatically means that they need space. So if this movie presents space, no matter how irritating it may be, it will be worth it. They won't come out tensed up; they'll they'll come out relaxed. They'll have gone through the whole trip of waiting to see something and then actually seeing something. They'll have gone through an eye-massage process.

I think it is a challenge for both the audience and the filmmakers. It is like crossing the Himalaya range to escape from the Chinese.

Prajna

THE PLAY IS PERFORMED in a large rectangular space with a circular performance area in the middle. Aisles lead to the circle from three points of the compass. When the audience is seated around the circle, the musicians go to their places at the fourth point of the compass. When the house lights go down, the actors go to their places in the dark.

A recorder duet is heard, then lights come up revealing six people dressed in white pajama-like clothing, holding brooms and facing each other at the center of the circle. They still sway to the recorder music even after it is finished. Their actions seem somewhat self-conscious and devotional. After a short time they turn outward as a group and begin sweeping the area in a choreographed pattern—out to the edge of the circle, in again, out again, and exit. Woodblocks clap.

Two men in white reenter with a low wooden table, place it near the center of the circle, bow affectionately to each other, and exit. Another man brings on a large gong, places it on the center of the table, bows, and exits. After a pause more objects are brought on: flowers, bowls of fruit, candles, incense, finally a plate of cream cheese and a basket of bagels. All exit.

From behind the audience a bugle fanfare is heard which is quickly joined by the percussionists. All parade on stage behind two large flags of India and the United States, which are placed in stands by the shrine. The music stops. They bow to each other, music recommences, and all march off. Blackout.

In darkness a shakuhachi flute is heard. The sound is penetrating. A single light picks out the shrine. Woodblocks clap four times. Clustered in the three aisles, the company chants the entire *Heart Sutra:*

Thus have I heard: Once the Blessed One was dwelling in the royal domain of the Vulture Peak Mountain, together with a great gathering of monks and bodhisattvas. At that time the Blessed One entered the samadhi which examines the dharmas, called "profound illumination," and at the same time noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva-mahasattva, looking at the profound practice of transcendent knowledge, saw the five skandhas and their natural emptiness.

Then through the inspiration of the Buddha, Shariputra said to Avalokiteshvara: "How should those noble ones learn, who wish to follow the profound practice of transcendent knowledge?" And Avalokiteshvara answered: "Shariputra, whoever wishes to follow the profound practice of transcendent knowledge should look at it like this, seeing the five skandhas and their natural emptiness. Form is emptiness, emptiness itself is form; emptiness is no other than form, form is no other than emptiness; in the same way feeling, perception, concept, and consciousness are emptiness. Thus all the dharmas are emptiness and have no characteristics. They are unborn and unceasing, they are not impure or pure, they neither decrease nor increase. Therefore since there is emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no concept, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no appearance, no sound, no smell, no taste, no sensation, no objects of mind; no quality of sight, no quality of hearing, no quality of smelling, no quality of tasting, no quality of sensing, no quality of thought, no quality of mind-consciousness; there are no nidanas, from ignorance to old age and death, nor their wearing out; there is no suffering, no cause of suffering, no ending of suffering, and no path; no wisdom, no attainment, and no nonattainment. Therefore since there is no attainment, the bodhisattvas abide by means of transcendent knowledge; and since there is no obscurity of mind they have no fear, they transcend falsity and pass beyond the bounds of sorrow. All the buddhas who dwell in the past, present, and future, by means of transcendent knowledge fully and clearly awaken to unsurpassed, true, complete enlightenment. Therefore the mantra of transcendent knowledge, the mantra of deep insight, the unsurpassed mantra, the unequalled mantra, the mantra which calms all suffering, should be known as truth, for there is no deception. In transcendent knowledge the mantra is proclaimed:

OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

O Shariputra, this is how a bodhisattva-mahasattva should learn profound transcendent knowledge."

Then the Blessed One arose from that samadhi and praised the bodhisattva-mahasattva Avalokiteshvara, saying: "Good, good, O son of noble family! Profound transcendent knowledge should be practiced just as you have taught, and the tathagatas will rejoice."

When the Blessed One had said this, Shariputra and Avalokiteshvara, that whole gathering and the world with its gods, men, asuras, and gandharvas, their hearts full of joy, praised the words of the Blessed One.

Lights come up on the circle. A woman wearing maroon robes walks slowly and deliberately to the shrine, kneels, removes a candle, rises, turns, and walks off. A man, also in maroon, enters from another direction, removes a bowl of fruit, exits. Others enter singly or in pairs to remove objects from the shrine, until only the gong remains. One of the robed men enters in the dignified manner that characterizes all of the maroon-clad ones, and places an empty vase on the shrine. Again the



A scene from the play Prajna *by Chögyam Trungpa.*

PHOTO BY ROBERT DEL TREDICI. USED BY PERMISSION.

shakuhachi is heard. After a pause a woman in long white robes, carrying a white flower, enters and walks slowly and deliberately to the shrine, kneels and places the flower in the vase. She then stands, and turning away from the shrine, speaks:

Namo Trasa
Bhagavato
Arahato
Samyak
Sambuddhasa

Never contaminated
Never bad
Never good
All the unfulfilled are fulfilled
The full moon
Magnificent lotus pond
Never bad
Never good
Your compassion is boundless
It is for the confused ones
As well as the unconfused ones
It is so good
Your gentle smile
Your kind touch
Never bad
Never good
Oh, dawn of Avalokiteshvara!

Lights fade to black.

Top lights come up on a man dressed in dark loose-fitting shirt and pants. He is seated in the full lotus position behind a large rock, his eyes closed. After several minutes he opens his eyes and examines the rock closely, exploring it with his hand. Then he speaks:

What is this stone?
This rock?
This concrete?

This solid glacier?
What is this fixation?
Who?
What?
Where?
When?
Why?
How?
So stubborn.
So solid.
Is this or isn't this?
When is the form?
What is the form?
Feeling?
Perception?
Concept?
Consciousness?

During the last few lines, the men and women in maroon enter carrying long wooden poles held upright before them. By the word *consciousness* they have formed in a horseshoe shape around him. As his speech ends, they lower their poles to point straight at him. The circle is flooded with light and woodblocks sound.

A drum begins to beat as the pole-bearers slowly raise their poles to the vertical. They step rapidly backward as temple-blocks sound, forward again as a bell sounds, and then lower their poles to the ground. Each time the pole-bearers raise their poles, the man lifts his rock, at first with great effort. This raising of the poles and the rock is repeated five times identically, except that each time the rock seems to have become lighter. The last time, the man lifts the rock high above his head with one hand.

Finally, the man sits on the rock as the pole-bearers recite:

> Form is emptiness, emptiness itself is form; emptiness is no other than form, form is no other than emptiness; in the same way, feeling, perception, concept, and consciousness are emptiness.

Blackout. All exit, including the rock.

The recorder players and percussionists strike up another fanfare. Lights come up as four men in red and gold enter carrying a large red blanket

held at the corners high above their heads. They march ceremoniously to the center of the circle, stop, then lower the blanket to the ground. They smooth it carefully and exit.

A very ragged fisherman enters, very much out of breath. He carries a burlap sack over one shoulder and rings a cowbell with his free hand. He speaks in a brogue as he makes his way down the aisle:

Blessings to everyone!
Bonjour!
Buenos Dias!
Good Morning!
Good Afternoon!
Good Evening!
Ladies and Gentlemen.

(He sits down heavily on a corner of the blanket, panting and swaying. After partially catching his breath, he continues:)

Well, it has been a good day today.
Springtime!
Glorious day!
I caught a lot of fish.
Some are small and sneaky,
Some are medium and slippery,
Some are big and delicious!
A good day's work. *Phew!*

I would say it's a pleasant day.
But then who knows?
Maybe the Lord knows—
But then what does he know about fishing?

(He sighs.)

The Lord's busy living in his castle,
And that's what he knows.

(During this speech, he has been undoing numerous knots in his sack. It is now finally open.)

Anyhow, I brung these for you.

(He takes out a small rock.)

This is for m'self.

(He places it heavily on the blanket, then takes out another rock.)

This is for m'mather.

(He places the rock on the blanket, then repeats the action for each of the following:)

This is for m'father.
This is for m'wife.
This is for m'husband.
This is for m'uncle Ben.
This is for m'aunt Joan.

Oh, and we musn't forget St. Patrick. We folk sure do have a short temper and a long memory!

(He becomes more intense and slightly hostile as he continues:)

This is for me eye.
This is for me ear.
This is for me nose.
This is for me tongue.
This is for me body.
This is for me mind.

During the last part of this speech, the pole-bearers have converged on him, poles held straight ahead. As he finishes, they surround him closely and chant in unison:

> Thus all dharmas are emptiness and have no characteristics. They are unborn and unceasing, they are not impure nor pure, they neither decrease nor increase. Therefore since there is emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no concept, no consciousness; no

> eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no appearance, no sound, no smell, no taste, no sensation, no objects of mind; no quality of sight, no quality of hearing, no quality of smelling, no quality of tasting, no quality of sensing, no quality of thought, no quality of mind-consciousness; there are no nidanas, from ignorance to old age and death, nor their wearing out; there is no suffering, no cause of suffering, no ending of suffering, and no path; no wisdom, no attainment, and no non-attainment.

During this recitation, the woman in white robes walks to the gong, holding a striker. Two of the blanket-carriers return, reaching the blanket just as the recitation ends. Then, in rapid succession, clappers sound, the woman strikes the gong, and the two men pull the blanket out roughly from under the fisherman and rocks. The pole-bearers begin to chant:

> Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha. Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha. Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha.

As they continue to chant, a drum joins in. Then the gong picks up the rhythm, the pole-bearers begin striking their poles together and start to circle around the fisherman. They gain speed and their circling becomes a dance.

At first the fisherman crawls about fearfully, trying to gather up the rocks. He abandons the rocks and starts to rise. He tries to break from the circle, hesitates, then tries again and again. Finally he stops and, for the first time, sees the dance. He raises his hands above this head and claps in time to the music, joining the dance.

Clappers sound. All stop, the lights fade to blackout. All exit.

A single light rises to a soft glow revealing the shakuhachi player, in maroon robes, sitting on the shrine table. He plays. When he has finished, the circle lights come up a bit, and the men and women in maroon enter carrying brooms. They form a tight circle in front of the shrine.

One by one they turn and sweep in a precisely stylized manner to the edge of the playing area, where each places his broom on the floor and sits facing the audience.

Lights fade to black. The company begins to leave the hall. Houselights come up.

Proclamation

CHARACTERS:

White Figure .... Chief (of the Mandala)
Tiger .... Dignity of the East
Dragon.. Dignity of the South
Garuda .... Dignity of the West
Lion.. Dignity of the North
Black Figure.................................... Mahakala or Active Principle

The play is performed on a square stage. First a chair is brought on and placed in the center, facing east. Then an effigy of Rudra [personification of egohood] is brought on and placed in front of the chair.

The WHITE FIGURE enters, sits in the chair. He speaks:

Ki Ki So So

Since there is no other space than this, since there are no two suns and moons or two universes, I would like to invite this one universe without beginning or end.

If the mind is free from doubt; if the emotions are free from pain and pleasure; if the experience of the world is free from hope and fear—I would like to declare that this is the true state of being and provoke and invite the ladies and gentlemen of the four directions to come and join me.

Ki Ki So So

I invite the four dignities of the four directions. From the east I invite the tiger—

Ki Ki So So

TIGER enters from the east. He speaks:

I am the awake of the tiger of the east. With my six stripes I wake all sentient beings. Wake and join us!

Awake! Awakening! We invite the world to wake. The tiger vision is good and meek. Come and meek with us.

Wake, wake, wake. Ki Ki Ki So So So

WHITE FIGURE:

From the south, I invite the dragon. Ki Ki So So

DRAGON enters from the south. He speaks:

I am the dragon of the south! I roar in thunder so there is no doubt left.
Proclaim! Proclamation!
With my flame I proclaim.
The dragon vision is good and inscrutable.
Come and inscrutable with us.
Proclaim, Proclaim, Proclaim.

Ki Ki Ki So So So

WHITE FIGURE:

From the west, I invite the garuda. Ki Ki So So

GARUDA enters from the west. He speaks:

I am the garuda!
I never wait for somebody's neurotic timely scheme.

King King Ki Ki
As I cry, I dive and prey on the corpse of neurosis.
Ki Ki Ki So So So
Dive! Dive in!
We invite the world to dive in. The garuda vision is good and outrageous. Come and outrage with us.
Dive Dive Dive
Ki Ki Ki So So So

WHITE FIGURE:

From the north, I invite the lion.
Ki Ki So So

LION enters from the north. He speaks:

I am the lion of the north.
I consume and crunch and chew the delicious neurosis of the setting sun.
I nest in snow.
I come along with snowstorms.
I appreciate rainy day.
Consume! Consumption!
We invite the world to consume.
The lion vision is good and perky.
Come and perk with us.
Consume Consume Consume
Ki Ki Ki So So So

BLACK FIGURE enters, bows to WHITE FIGURE. He speaks:

Good evening!
Good morning!
Good night!

To WHITE FIGURE:

So good to see you sir, for the good cause of this universe.

To audience:

But this does not have to be all that solemn and we could develop some sense of humor. What is this wretched setting-sun hero, Rudra, frog, left over meat, pathetic alligator lying here. Let us do something about this.
Good evening!
Let us do something about this.

BLACK FIGURE dances around Rudra while saying:

Let us perform
This good dance
Which will separate
The limbs and heads of such Rudra
Fixation of ego
Haha! with tremendous humor
Fantastic humor
We do the performing mudra
Of separating and destroying
the Rudra of ego,
This setting-sun hero.

BLACK FIGURE divides up the Rudra

To WHITE FIGURE:

Take this head of egomaniac Rudra, sir.

To TIGER:

Take this right arm and torso.

To DRAGON:

Take this left arm and torso.

To GARUDA:

Take this right leg.

To LION:

Take this left leg.

WHITE FIGURE remains seated. Others dance around stage while all chant:

Ki Ki So So
We have killed the setting sun.
We have destroyed
The neurosis of setting sun.
As we go
As we come
As we perform
We are victorious
Over the good old setting-sun vision.
It is very funny.
And very sad.
None the less
Such celebration
Is hilarious.

WHITE FIGURE rises, all walk around the stage chanting the Heart Sutra, audience joins in:

"Thus have I heard. . . ."

Basic Sanity in Theater

IN ORDER TO PERFORM we have to relate to reality. This is asking a lot I suppose, but if we are going to give an enlightened performance, we have to do it. So to begin, we must have some training on how to relate to reality. It's not a matter of questioning the nature of reality, it's learning about your style of relating to reality. The theme of our theater practice is how we relate to things. Whether we are dramatic or expressive or musical, whether we can dance beautifully or act beautifully doesn't seem to matter particularly. Our approach is to simply relate completely to one coin or one log.

I think what we are trying to work out is some sense of speech and body coordination generally. As ordinary healthy people we coordinate quite well, we can talk, we can listen, we can behave in the different ways that our emotions permit. But in theater we tend to become hesitant. We no longer know what to do or how to behave. We become completely incompetent and lost and don't know how to handle anything. So the process that is involved here is to grow out of that babylike mentality, and to learn to coordinate our body and speech as though an ordinary, natural life situation were taking place.

It seems that our goal is not to reach Broadway of nirvana, particularly. Anyway, Broadway is not my idea of nirvana. We are more interested in changing people's perceptions about theater—it's the backbone approach to theater rather than the glamour approach. Although possibly our approach may become glamorous in a few years, or a few centuries. But as long as we plant some kind of seed in the field of American energy and entertainment, we could make a contribution which would be extraordinarily powerful. I feel it would be a very helpful and compassionate thing to do.

A lot of people are afraid of the world of entertainment. They would prefer to rush into retreat to develop themselves, rather than make a contribution to others. But we could combine the bodhisattva and yogic practices in our theater work. I think there's a lot of room to teach by performing. I don't mean that we have to present a Buddhist paradox of the morality plays or do children's stories about Milarepa, or the tantric equivalent of *Macbeth*. We could develop a broader sense of theater than that, writing scripts as well as performing. We could present all kinds of alternatives. Even the Broadway type of play, which is extremely paranoid and painful and bewildering, would be very interesting to do.

At the moment religious theater in the West is extremely limited. Ranging from *A Christmas Carol* to *Murder in the Cathedral,* it's like one pipe without any bend, even without any leak. It seems to spring from a monotone approach to the gospel of the voice of goodness. The consequences are always predictable.

We aren't interested in laying any heavy trips on the audience, or creating gimmicks, but we could combine the fundamental Buddhist approach to perception with some of the philosophical ideas that have developed in Buddhism.

Hopefully we could raise some funds to sustain a living situation so we could create a good school for dedicated people working in theater. It would be another kind of retreat practice, in fact. It's a worthwhile course, needless to say. We need committed people who would regard this as their practice, as their sadhana. Theater is extremely appealing to a lot of people, but it also is the epitome of the dilettante, which is actually "theater materialism," the equivalent of spiritual materialism which we have to cut through. It's more a life and death attitude than a theatrical approach. People have to get into it properly. An extraordinary amount of discipline is involved. This theater school is far away in terms of our present financial situation, but that is my dream.

Heaven, Earth, and Man

THE PHENOMENAL WORLD is self-existing. You can see it, you can look at it, you can appreciate your survey, and you can present your view to others. It is possible to discover the inherent state of things. It is possible to perceive how the world hangs together. It is possible to communicate your appreciation to others. The possibility of freshness is always there. Your mind is never totally contaminated by your neuroses. Goodness is always there. Catch it on the spot. Click into the sense of delight that comes from basic wakefulness.

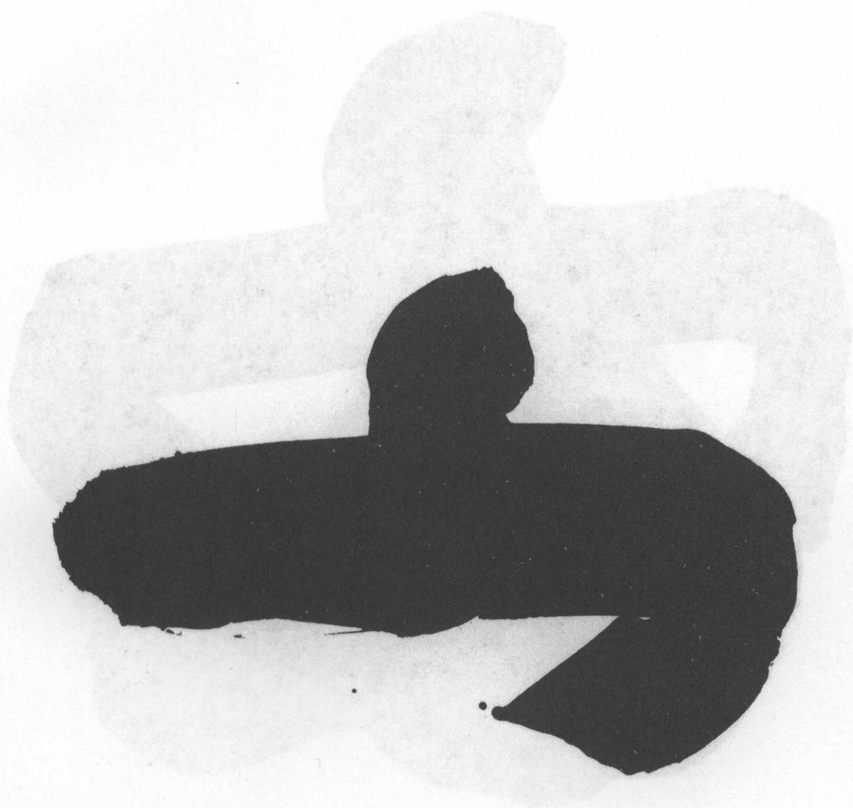
There is an old Buddhist tradition of perception based on threefold logic. The tantric art of Tibetan Buddhism uses the element of dharmakaya as the background of manifestation, sambhogakaya as the potential of manifestation, and nirmanakaya as the final manifestation. Basically, these elements comprise the principles of heaven, earth, and man.

The first aspect of threefold logic, the heaven principle, establishes the ground. For example, this fan. The second aspect, the earth principle, develops a relationship with the ground. In this case the fan could open. The third aspect, the man principle, confirms its existence. We can wave the fan and create a breeze.

The general meaning of ground, or heaven, is a totality of space that we operate in. We can walk, dance, kick, and stretch ourselves in the atmosphere. There's lots of room, lots of freedom, and a sense of wakefulness. We can afford to relax. We can discover the sacred quality of art, which has nothing to do with the artist's faith or religion. Any good work of art has a sense of sacredness that is powerful, dignified, and very real.

The second aspect, which complements and activates the heaven

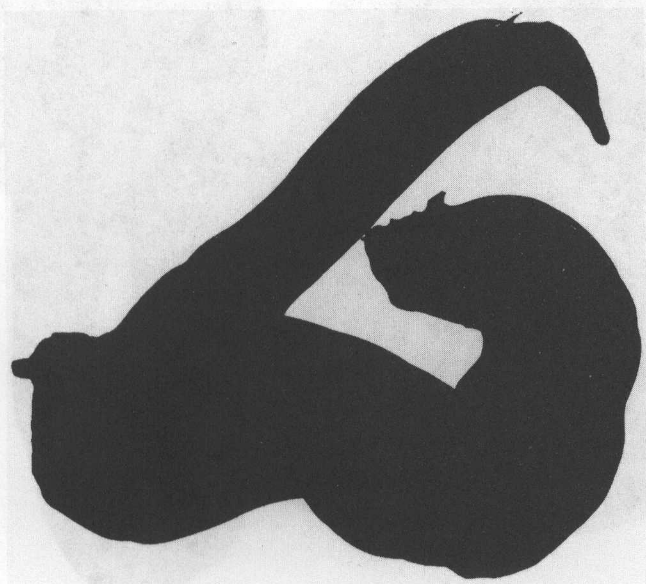
principle, is earth. Earth is fertile and wholesome and accommodating. It serves as an anchor and, at the same time, an oar. But heaven and earth without occupants is unfulfilling. So the natural order includes man, which joins them together and creates a dynamic interrelated situation. We can use these principles to uncover the cosmic dignity and elegance that exist in our lives and in our art.



1. Heaven. *Heaven is more than empty space. It has the authority of divine principles coming down to earth. In this calligraphy heaven has the quality of conquering space. This is the basic principle of heaven, the sense of being unyielding and regal.*



***2. Playful heaven.** We could go further and experience a playful heaven which has more openness, more room to work with. But the heaven principle can con you into self-deception. It could be dangerous if you trip out on it.*



3. Genuine heaven. *The blank paper invites you to begin with your first dot. If you start with "first thought best thought," you can invite a genuine heaven.*



4. Earth. *Earth has a grounded quality, a sort of mother earth principle.*



5. **Pregnant earth.** *We could create a pregnant earth that encompasses everything it encounters. But that could also bring up problems. A gentleman who becomes too involved with the household could be reduced to the level of a housewife.*



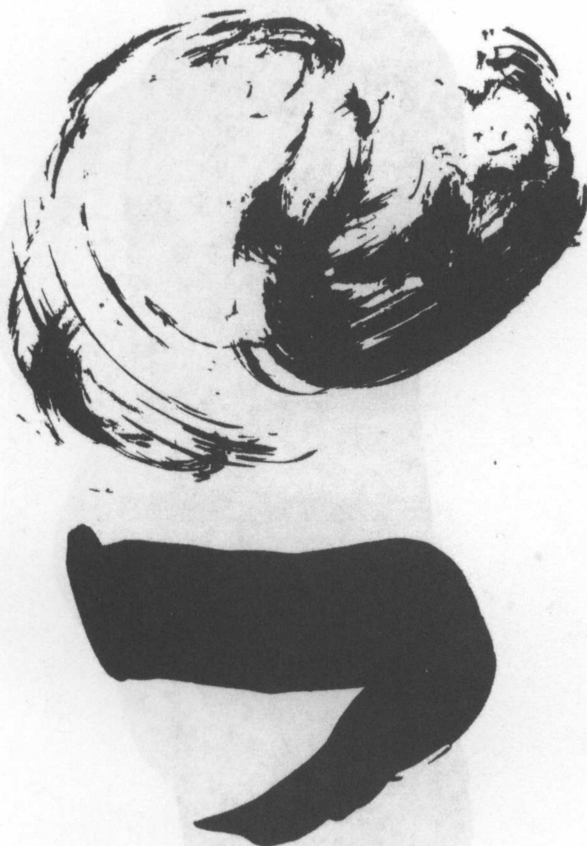
6. Gentle earth. *A very gentle earth can accommodate anything, even chaos.*



7. Man. *We can introduce man at this point. Man can be daring or possibly cute, particularly as babies — unless you forget to change his diapers.*



***8. Man in love.** Wounded man, or, you could say, man in love — which is saying the same thing. A man in love has been wounded already. In this calligraphy man is just an individual entity without any reference to heaven or earth.*



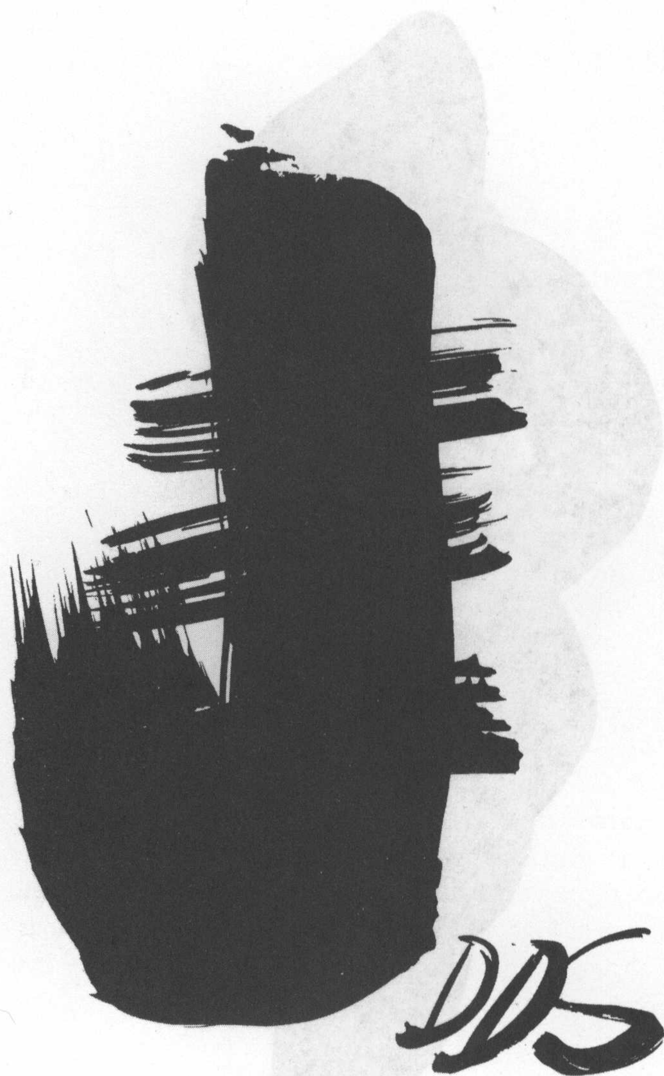
9. Potential man. *Here man is open and strong at the same time. He is daring and good. Potential man. He might be able to relate to visual dharma or become a Buddhist, It reminds me of Mozart for some reason.*



10. Kingdom. *We join heaven, earth, and man together. If we include a king this particular calligraphy becomes monumental.*



11. ***Union.*** *Heaven, earth, and man joined together in the third stroke.*



12. Universal monarch.

Perception and the Appreciation of Reality

WELCOME, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

We are discussing this evening perception and the appreciation of reality. In the ordinary sense, when we talk about a work of art, we generally regard it as requiring *talent*. Some people begin to reject themselves because they feel they don't have talent. It could be even sewing, cooking, painting, interior decorating, photography, or anything that involves aesthetics. Of course, flower arranging is included. But we are not talking about talent as such. Generally speaking, we believe that everyone who possesses the appreciation of sight, smell, sound, feelings, is capable of communicating with the rest of the world. In Buddhism we talk about the sense perceptions, the sense organs, and the sense objects, which actually work together. The perceptions begin to project, through sense organs toward sense objects. It could be regarded as film in your camera. The film could be regarded as sense consciousness, and the camera itself could be regarded as sense organs, and the view that you see could be regarded as sense objects. Anybody is capable of doing this and perceiving such perceptions.

And then there is your upbringing, in terms of parents, of schooling, and of life in general. Some people have experienced tremendous claustrophobia through schooling, parents, life, job, etc. But on the other hand, some people have felt the experience of space—sometimes too much space, in fact. They haven't had enough experience. Everything has become vacant and they feel they haven't explored the world enough.

Such things as space and perception are expressed in this particular form, flower arrangement, and we could say that ikebana is a way to

enter into the general social phenomena—phenomena of sense perceptions and how to handle one's life and artistic discipline altogether. Ikebana allows us to develop some sense of discipline and it reflects back how much general appreciation and general sense of being in the world one has managed altogether. Ikebana discipline is not just arranging pretty flowers or organizing a beautiful arrangement. But it is a reflection of oneself. Sometimes we might find ourselves so embarrassed that we actually manifested ourselves on a flower-arranging dish. From that point of view, it's much better than going to a psychiatrist.

This particular style of flower arranging, ikebana, is from the Sogetsu School of Ikebana. The Sogetsu School in Japan does not only pay attention to flower arranging, but also it pays attention to sculpture and to creating an environment out of a variety of things. My meeting with my teacher in England (Stella Coe of the Sogetsu School) provided me with a tremendous shock and surprise that such a new dimension of working with reality could be presented in terms of ikebana. The first time I saw a flower arrangement I was quite amazed that dignity and reality could be expressed by means of that particular arrangement. There is beauty and there is cruelty. Maybe there is invitation, there is seduction, and in fact the whole thing is like the Buddhist teaching. So, it is not just purely a work of art. It is a manifestation of reality which can be presented in a simple but very spacious fashion. Ikebana practice teaches how to go about your life. It requires a great deal of paying attention, nonaggression and not being speedy. I think I have said enough and you might be confused if I said too much. Maybe we could have a discussion on it.

Question: Sir, you mentioned the word *spaciousness*. Could you say more about what you mean by spaciousness?

Vajracharya: Spaciousness could be nonaggression and observing situations, so you can see the situation thoroughly. Also the spaciousness brings inspiration. If you don't allow space in your execution of art, sometimes you run into a brick wall and you're suddenly alarmed at your ignorance and don't know what to do about it and you panic. Then you might be too embarrassed to give up, so you do it badly. So spaciousness, and room to move about would help tremendously. It's the inspiration, and inspiration could grow out of being spacious.

Q: You talked about presenting ourselves on a plate when we do a work of art. What is it that makes it so reflective?

V: Well, I think it's a general commonsense situation. If you don't have some discipline in your state of mind, then you're going to produce confusion, rather than orderliness. And that doesn't necessarily mean to say that people who study ikebana have to sit and meditate but they could use the shamatha-vipashyana principles in their study, in their work. In doing so one begins to realize chaos, boredom, inadequacy, and all the rest of it. So one then begins to develop some sense of humor.

[*In critiquing a student arrangement:*]

The whole point is that each arrangement has to have a conquering quality, spacious quality. And the flowers, if I may say so, shouldn't stare at you but should be placed as they have grown. It seems that the whole principle is based on creating space. And at the same time the arrangement can be bold and striking. So one shouldn't be too tentative and one also shouldn't be too fascinated by the little beauty that exists in the branches. One should cut the imperfections that exist in the branches.

Art of Simplicity

"DISCOVERING ELEGANCE"

This interview was conducted by José Argüelles and Rick Fields during the "Discovering Elegance" exhibit at the LAICA Gallery in Los Angeles December 1980.

José Argüelles: Could you tell us what dharma art is, especially in relationship to "Discovering Elegance"?

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche: Dharma art is the principal way we are trying to create enlightened society, which is a society where there is no aggression, and where people could discover their innate basic goodness and enlightened existence, whether it is in a domestic or political or social situation.

I suppose at the beginning, when someone enters the environment of the exhibit, there might be some sense of confusion and awe and bewilderment. But at the same time, people begin to find that they are in a world which is very soft and elegant and workable. They begin to enjoy the beauty of the things that we have displayed here. So the starting point seems to be that there is a natural beauty and elegance that people have wished to see for a long time, and which they see manifested in this exhibit.

At the same time, they could realize that they don't have to spend too much money to create such an elegant world. They could create an elegant world without a great deal of expenditure: rather, the elegance and precision come from their upbringing of mindfulness.

JA: In this exhibit, you have arranged rooms containing flower arrangements, calligraphy, Japanese swords—many things that people probably wouldn't have in their ordinary environment. How would such people say, "This is my world, too?"

CTR: Well, this may not be the world that people are used to, but at the same time, they might have the desire to become part of this particular world of elegance.

A similar thing happens when you go shopping, when you go to the grocery, when you buy new clothes—with anything you do; you look for something that you would like to include in your world, in order to elegantize it. If you go out shopping, you might buy new shampoo and new soap or new pants. The exhibit can work in the same way, attracting people to a new vision of elegance.

JA: How does the heaven, earth, and man principle come into play in the show here?

CTR: The heaven aspect is a sense of vastness. There is lots of room and spaciousness. Earth is that things are grounded, at the same time. They are not heady, so to speak. The man principle is that human beings can join in and participate in the principle of heaven, earth, and man.

Rick Fields: Rinpoche, you mentioned that dharma art is nonaggressive. One of your installations is a drum room that contains many weapons and a set of Japanese armor. How can a display of weaponry be nonaggressive?

CTR: It is a question of how you relate with your teeth and your nails and the expression on your face, which are basic to man's existence. Human beings have a question about how they can actually handle that kind of situation.

Specially produced weapons, such as swords and bows and arrows, are not particularly a problem at all. The whole question of weapons is basically a question of not being afraid of having sharp teeth, or long nails. It is not a question of creating warfare as such, but of overcoming your own cowardice.

As we know, it has been said that if you are placed among warriors, and you are a coward, you are constantly petrified because the warriors are carrying weaponry and you are expected to carry a weapon as well. It is a question of not being able to use your weapon properly. You are so frightened of your own weapon, you are afraid that you might trip over it or step on it, that you might kill yourself with it.

The question here is how to overcome cowardice so that your handling of weaponry is free from accidents of any kind, so that you don't kill anybody by accident or by mindlessness or by cowardice. Once the

warrior knows how to use the weapon properly, there is no particular problem at all. The weapon begins to become an adornment.

JA: Adornment? Part of what you beautify yourself with?

CTR: That's right. It is as much adornment as having nice teeth because you go to the dentist, or having nice fingernails because you go to a manicurist.

We could say that when women wear makeup, it is not supposed to be only an inducement of other people's passion, constantly all the time. The purpose of putting on makeup is not purely to express sexuality alone, or to degrade or seduce somebody: the point is that women actually should look nice and beautify themselves.

JA: As an art critic coming to your installation, I find it a fantastically beautiful show. I rarely see something like this done. I was curious how you as an artist feel about having done the show?

CTR: I don't think particularly in terms of being an artist. I regard myself as just a day-to-day person. Just like everyone else, I dress myself, I brush my teeth. I just do all those details of life expansively.

JA: Expansively?

CTR: Yes. I don't regard my life purely as a manifestation of a work of art, particularly. I don't consider myself as an artist per se, at all. I don't regard myself as the author of this exhibition, obviously, but I feel very good about it, nonetheless. I am more proud of and pleased with the people around me, who have created the environment, than I am with myself.

JA: Do you see art as a way of working with obstacles?

CTR: Obstacles, yes, as well as organization. A lot of administration goes with art. It is like the administration that goes into organizing Vajradhatu. That is part of art as well.

JA: So you are speaking about a collective work of art. Usually in the West we think of artists as working alone.

RF: Yes, that's an interesting point. Here you've been working with such a large group of people, and there have been all sorts of administrative problems as well as the basic problems of Los Angeles—traveling huge distances and various hassles. Yet out of that has come this exhibit, which projects tranquillity and harmony.

CTR: Actually, I appreciate working with other people very much. As you know, a lot of the students who have worked on the exhibit are

Buddhist practitioners. They also have an interest in practicing art—ikebana and other disciplines like that.

As they begin to know how to organize art and how to handle themselves properly, then they are also reassured that they can create enlightened society. That seems to be the main point. The exhibit is not so much a one-man show, which would be dictatorial, but it is a group show organized by one person, myself. This group approach creates enlightened society, which seems to be the enlightened idea of a monarchy—one person makes a beginning, and then the rest of the situation can happen organically.

JA: One last question. Often we think of a work of art in connection with some romantic inspiration. What you were talking about a few minutes ago is art in relation to organization. Could you say a little bit more about art as organization rather than something heard from the muse.

CTR: Yes. It's a question of a group inspiration being put together. We are not talking about art as creating one painting on one canvas alone. We are also talking about how that canvas, that painting, is displayed. There is a particular gallery to put that canvas in, as well as a lot of other canvases. So a person can see the whole orchestration of an entire world being put together.

That is the point: otherwise a work of art is singled out, as just one thing, like taking a Rolex watch and hiding it in your pocket to smuggle it through customs. Art should have its own environment altogether, its own entire world altogether, which beautifies the world, basically speaking.

JA: Art creates the environment, the world, through collective effort, and vision creates the environment so that the world actually becomes more beautiful, more harmonious, more organized.

CTR: We are trying to help people to cheer up, so that they could have a good time at the same time.

I also would like to say, as I said already, that I am extremely appreciative of the helpers, the friends who have been helping me to make this show possible, the people who have worked on a large or small scale to create this particular installation. I'm very impressed by all of them, and very thankful to all of them. They are completely included in the enlightened kingdom.

JA: How does the notion of simplicity relate to the elegance of dharma art?

CTR: I think that people can find possibilities for an elegant world for themselves, without having to become millionaires who can afford to have expensive houses in Beverly Hills. People can organize their lives simply. Living in their own little apartments, they could elegantize themselves.

I think dharma art is an encouragement to upgrade even poverty-level situations. People who are poor can be elegant. That is the main point that we are making here, rather than saying that rich people should learn how to be elegant. The rich should learn how to be simple at this point. Simpler sometimes is better.

That is how monasticism began. It began in poverty, even in the Catholic tradition. Catholic monasticism acknowledges the importance of simplicity. Richer people need to bend down, much more so. They should tune into the simplicity of beauty, the beauty of living elegantly but simply.

RF: In watching you work, both on this show and many other times, I've noticed the tremendous precision in what you do and lack of speed—which personally has been an inspiration to me. I don't think I've ever seen you in a hurry, and yet a tremendous amount happens.

CTR: Well, I think that dharma art is a sense of paying attention to what you have, what you are, what you have available. When you pay attention, it makes things beautiful and workable, always. You have to be willing to take the time. Dharma art is being on the spot, and being precise, and appreciating what goes on around you, but also taking your time, not just simply jumping the gun. It's being on the spot always.

Dharma Art Stresses Harmony and Elegance

Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche: Dharma art, or art altogether, is not purely for the sake of art alone. It is inspired by the possibility of developing basic elegance and harmony and a sense of sanity.

Q: What criteria or standards do you use to determine what is a good work of art?

CTR: I think it is a question of whether the particular artwork creates a sense of harmony or a perception of disharmony in the room. Art can either create chaos in a room or make you feel settled in a room. It has something to do with inviting less aggression and less speed, but at the same time, it requires tremendous discipline.

Q: Why do you think it is valuable to define those qualities as *dharma* art, particularly at this time in America, as opposed to simply art that works, art that succeeds? Why label it *dharma* art?

CTR: Dharma is a Sanskrit word that means "basic norm." It's not a particularly religious term. *Dharma* is said to mean "that which creates harmony," "that which makes things workable." In other words, it is that which promotes harmony and dignity. So we are not necessarily talking about religion. I think that's how it works.

Q: Can this art be taught? Let's say there is somebody who has absolutely no style or taste, and he wants to learn how to do dharma art. Is that possible?

CTR: I think such a person is actually in a better position because he has nothing to unlearn to begin with. People who have no idea could start right away, while someone who has too many ideas might have to unlearn for a while.

Q: But it can be taught?

CTR: I think so. The details that we use are the details that exist around us. In some sense it is just common sense. It requires a lot of concentration and training—obviously, any form of art requires discipline—but it is not all that difficult to learn. It is question of synchronizing mind and body together properly, then reaching out.

Q: How much does inspiration, just pure inspiration, have to do with it?

CTR: Quite a lot. It takes inspiration toward cheerfulness and celebration, and a sense of gentleness to oneself and others—a lot of things like that.

Q: So there is no room for the expression of aggression in this kind of art.

CTR: No, that's not quite it. Dharma art could be offensive to somebody, you know. In that sense it might be aggressive.

Q: Well, you were describing dharma art as harmonious and peaceful. Isn't that just one particular state of mind that art in artistic surroundings can help create? Don't you feel there is also value in art that unsettles preconceptions and inspires fresh perceptions, fresh reactions, fresh responses? Is that kind of unsettling quality any different than the peacefulness you were describing?

CTR: When we talk about peacefulness, we are talking about some sense of intelligence. There is lots of room for that, definitely. There is no ideal pattern that we should follow; dharma art is not regimented that way. There is lots of room for individual identity.

Q: Could you talk about that specifically, for example in relation to the piece you just created? Could you say something about the process you went through as you were creating it, and then the effect that it has right now, as we look at it?

CTR: Yes. Sometimes your project confuses you to begin with. Then you have to look into it more and find your way, find out that there is some particular system for satisfying your inquisitiveness. There is a lot to learn from that.

Q: When you use a word like inquisitiveness, does it have a different connotation than it does either traditionally or in current usage? Is it a different kind of inquisitiveness?

CTR: You feel that you're just about to get something, but you can't quite get it. It is that kind of inquisitiveness: some sort of prick.

Q: I'm sitting here, sir, with your piece of art, and at this point I feel

very nervous about it: I feel like rearranging the entire rest of the room. Do you know what I mean? We have a nonaggressive arrangement in a very aggressive room, and that aggression is coming across. This arrangement really brings that quality of aggression out; I feel it. So if you were really to live with this every day—I assume what you're getting at is that the word *art* means everyday life—you would really have to redo your entire house. So let me ask you this: If you were to arrange a piece specifically to be in this room as it exists, how would you do that differently?

CTR: Well, I would change this room. Or change the world for that matter. You're right.

Q: Almost all of the different fields of contemporary art are very involved with art criticism. It's very difficult to separate working in art from the whole critical world that surrounds it. Do you feel that what you are doing is somehow stepping away from that?

CTR: Not necessarily. There is always room for intelligence, and practically speaking, criticism is very helpful. Working with criticism could be our way, as artists, to develop further intelligence. We can't just rely on false security and feel that since we belong to some tradition, therefore we are okay.

Q: But what kind of criticism would apply to a work like this? Historical criticism? Comments such as, "Well, that didn't work," or "That didn't kill me," or maybe, "That element works or doesn't work"? Could we discuss it that way?

CTR: Sure. We could.

Q: What are the criteria?

CTR: I suppose the criterion is whether the creation itself has enough harmony, or if it lacks something as a result of sloppiness and shortcomings of all sorts: not paying attention to the details, the balance and everything else.

Q: So if you were a teacher of this kind of art and someone presented you with a piece, you could literally point to parts of it and say, "That does work and that doesn't work"?

CTR: Absolutely. In fact, that can be done with this sort of art much more easily than most of the art in the traditional critics' world. From that point of view, this art is very, very precise, extremely precise.

Q: Do you think there is a set of general principles involved here that can be applied to any other artistic discipline?

CTR: Definitely. We talk about three principles: heaven, earth, and man. There is the basic notion of joining heaven and earth and man together. In flower arranging, heaven is the main branch that we put in first; earth is the second branch that we put in the back; and then man principle is the flowers and any other paraphernalia that we might put in the front. There are those three things.

Q: Does that apply to every piece you approach?

CTR: It applies to anything you do: making a cup of tea, designing a building, whatever. You have to have the first thought, then the second thought, and then the final conclusion and whatever paraphernalia goes with it cosmetically. That makes things complete.

Q: So when you approach a piece, do you first say, "Now I'm going to deal with the sky," and then you go and do that; and then, "Now I have to deal with the earth part, and I'll put this here"? I mean, do you actually approach it that consciously?

CTR: Yes. There has to be some system of making it clear. Otherwise you just do anything, and that makes you very confused and angry as well.

Q: What about intuitive art?

CTR: Heaven, earth, and man are part of intuition as well. They are based on the system of how we think, ordinarily speaking. It is like turning on the engine, then putting the car in gear, and then driving. Everything goes in that threefold way.

Q: Don't you think somebody with a certain amount of highly developed intuition and perception could just do something without having been trained? Couldn't someone simply instinctively create something?

CTR: Well, I suppose the original founders of the tantric tradition did that, but at this point, their discovery has become our path.

Q: If we took a look at a conventional painting, could you distinguish the heaven, earth, and man principles? It seems that in much of the contemporary Western art that we see, although the artists clearly haven't been trained in or exposed to this system, somehow they have developed it on their own. They probably wouldn't describe it in the words that you use, but they seem to have developed it independently. Or is that really not possible unless they have been trained?

CTR: Well, they have to be trained somewhere. At least they have to know how to hold a brush and how to work with ink. Even at that level the three principles are involved. That is not necessarily Oriental at all.

In all traditions, you learn how to start things. You have to go to school somewhere and ask someone how to do it, and then you get the point.

Q: But isn't there art that involves a different kind of training that doesn't achieve these specific results?

CTR: Sure, but still the artist sees the Great Eastern Sun, always.

Q: So basically you are saying that any piece of art that has quality has these three principles, whether the artist is conscious of it or not.

CTR: Yes, it exists in any culture; it is beyond culture.

Q: In the presentation of these kinds of Oriental arts, is there always that understanding that the principles are beyond culture? Don't you think it often slips and becomes a subtle propaganda for certain cultures, a certain way of doing things?

CTR: I think there are a lot of trips involved with that. If there is too much emphasis on a particular culture, it ceases to be real art. There is that problem always. You will find, actually, that the way Oriental art is viewed in the West is exactly the same as the way Occidental art is viewed in the East. Exactly the same sort of perversion takes place.

Q: Are you saying that without these qualities, art basically will not be effective on a deeper level, that it will not be more than just a pleasant picture?

CTR: Well, that's the truth of superficial art: it is purely something pretty. Then there is a deeper level, which is more than merely something pretty. True art brings out the basic goodness of human beings altogether.

Q: Do you feel that art, such as this piece, is meant to affect people on a particular level, or is it just meant to be viewed?

CTR: Ideally speaking, a work of art should have some depth to communicate to man's insight, rather than being purely a nice thing to have in your house. It should have a profound effect. That seems to be the literal meaning of art, even from the dictionary's point of view.

Q: A lot of contemporary American art seems to deal with ideas; it is intellectual. Your piece, aside from being traditional, is more along the lines of what you see is what you get. There are not a lot of contemporary ideas behind it. It seems that the way in which ideas produce contemporary art is one level that your art does not work on, at least for me.

CTR: Yes. I think it is a question of how much kindness begins to permeate a work as the artist becomes settled in his or her own particu-

lar discipline, how much softness and gentleness permeates the work. That seems to be the fundamental basic criterion for any art. Sometimes a lot of art creates frustration and destruction in a fundamental sense. Whether or not an artist is famous and has been around, whether or not he speaks the language of millions of dollars, still his art may have that bad message, which is a kind of pollution. Then there is other art that serves to clear the pollution. That is what we should aim for.

Q: Isn't there a danger that searching for the harmonious could create an idealistic kind of art, an art that has to stretch a little to produce the harmony and beauty? There have been periods of art that have done that, so that what you look at on the walls seems to be some kind of wishful vision.

CTR: The main point is that in order to see the harmony in your situation, you have to study the chaos first. Even in the process of creating harmonious art, you have to experience what is not harmonious. That allows you to see every aspect of it, both sides, black and white. At that point you begin to respect both sides, chaos as well as harmony, so you can go beyond to something that is completely unconditional.

We are not talking about just trying to shut off the ugly part. We have to look at both sides at the same time. And actually to begin with, particularly when they try to create harmonious art, artists seem to end up producing more chaos. Beginning students always end up with more chaos, which is fine, good. They have to go through that difficulty. Then finally, because they have dealt with so much chaos already, they begin to realize what real harmony is. It's a cycle they go through.

Q: Isn't there some value to an artist who explores certain aspects of the human condition that may not be all that pretty to look at? Isn't it important for those aspects to be explored by some artists, and mirrored back to society, so that society can take a look at itself on some level? Isn't that just as valid as creating art that does produce harmony and has good grace?

CTR: Sure, I think so. But at the same time, the fundamental human quality is supposed to be good; it is not wicked. That's what we are looking for.

An excerpt from a September 9, 1980, press conference in Los Angeles with Rinpoche and editors of Zero, Ten Directions, *and* Wet *magazines.*

Art and Education

WELCOME, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I'm afraid I haven't prepared any of my talk tonight. I am hoping that you can provide some reference point for me. I am putting my trust in you, which is perhaps another way of working with the concept of art and education. Now that you are all here, and now that I'm here, I feel quite comfortable, so maybe we could begin our talk.

This topic was chosen because the integrity of Naropa Institute is largely based on the idea of human development. Human development consists of discipline and the sharpening of insight. Hopefully the students of Naropa Institute could share what they have developed with the rest of the world.

In connection with human development, art is a rather vast subject. It includes the practice of meditation, learning about ourselves, and discovering the nonexistence of our ego (which begins with our discussing the existence of our ego).

We don't regard ourselves as a strictly Buddhist institution; we regard ourselves as a Buddhist-inspired situation. Without that inspiration, there would be no basis for working with anything at all. It has been that Buddhist environment which brought us here. We could discuss everything quite frankly and freely: the way we grow up, the way we approach that growing-up process, and the way we relate with a further sense of discovery beyond the growing-up process alone. We could discuss how we can relate with ourselves as decent human beings, and how we can relate with our fathers, our mothers, our economy, our husbands and wives, our brothers and sisters, our friends, and the rest of the world.

I'm sure you have heard this from many other sources, from other traditions on this continent and in the world at large, but we might be so presumptuous as to say that our approach is unique. Our approach is very strange; it is unique. As a further accomplishment and as the fruition of the discipline of our students and of anybody who is interested in the practice of human decency, we have achieved, we are achieving, and we will achieve the shining forth of that decency to manifest as basic goodness.

With that logic, we regard our institute as somewhat secular. In our vocabulary, the word "secular" means "without dogma." We can relate with our bread-and-butter situation, with our breakfast, lunch, and dinner, fully and thoroughly. In fact, breakfast, lunch, and dinner are sacred.

That sacredness is where the concept of art comes from. It is a double-edged sword: it is spiritual but not necessarily religious.

The integrity of Naropa Institute remains completely intact and clean-cut at this point. We have never made any modification in order to fit Naropa Institute to the materialistic socket of the Western world. On the other hand, we are not trying to claim any kind of superiority. The integrity of Naropa Institute has not been compromised as far as I know. We are decent, reasonable, and highly disciplined, and we take pride in that.

ART

Art is environment. Education is the mind which relates with that environment. That's how we see the functioning of Naropa Institute. Art is environment because whatever we do in the course of our life—depositing money in the bank, cashing a check, making business deals, cooking breakfast, preparing a party for our friends, buying a new hat, mending our clothes, stopping at the gas station to fill up our car—any activity that is part of the spectrum of our life is art, very much art. We are capable of doing all those things properly.

However, many of you couldn't care less about that; you just do all those things randomly; your attitude is just to do them and get rid of them. But sacredness is your capability for doing all those things. You have the capability of eating breakfast, you have the capability of mending your clothes, you have the capability of putting your clothes in the

washing machine and your dishes in the dishwasher. You have all those capabilities, and you don't mix things up.

You have a general kind of intelligence that allows you to be here, as all of you are here tonight. Obviously you are here because you know what you're doing—somewhat. I don't think anybody is here by mistake. Nobody is here because he thought this was a gas station; nobody is here because he thought this was a restaurant. That logic seems to be very small and very naive, but it makes sense. You managed to be at this particular place at this particular time. You are wearing certain clothes and you are sitting on a certain seat; you are listening and trying to understand.

All your activities are regarded as expressions of basic intelligence or basic goodness. You possess the discriminating-awareness wisdom that allows you to do what you want, which is in itself a work of art. It is an expression of what in the buddhist tradition we call *prajna,* which means "the best of knowledge." Basic integrity means knowing what you're doing. That notion, along with some sense of your basic goodness, takes place very powerfully. Everybody is good; everybody possesses basic goodness—for the very reason that you are here and you are capable of being here, for the very reason that your intelligence and your intellect led you here. You are willing to share this feast of intelligence and sanity with us, and that is astounding and extraordinary. On the other hand, it is very ordinary.

We have an expression called "ordinary mind," and we have an expression called "the best of mind," or "the greatest insight." Both mean exactly the same thing. They both come to the one conclusion: whatever you do is an expression of basic goodness in you. All of you look healthy. Maybe some of you are quite skeptical, but still you are sort of tickled in your hearts and open and wondering. The whole point is that you possess that kind of presence, which you project—all of you. That means that you have something going which in simple, ordinary language we call "basic goodness." It makes you feel good. [*Baby crying in audience*] The baby cries, but he cries very wholeheartedly. [*Laughter*]

Art is not merely being able to do your music or your painting or your little arrangements of this and that. The kind of art we are talking about tonight is big art; it is that we have basic goodness in an environment like this, which is in itself a work of art. It is really worth cheering up tremendously. Sometimes if you try too hard to understand some-

thing you find yourself deaf and dumb on the spot, so I wouldn't try too hard to understand tonight. Just relax and catch the edge of the words. It is more important to listen to the punctuation than to the words themselves.

EDUCATION

Education is our second topic for tonight. In the environment that we have created here tonight, the principle of education is discipline. That says a lot. In fact, that applies not only while you're here, but after you leave tonight, when you go back to your homes, when you fall asleep and wake up tomorrow morning as well. According to the philosophy of Naropa Institute, education is like a yeast infection. It grows on you. [*Laughter*] As it grows on you, it becomes still more infectious. It goes beyond and beyond and beyond. What you are hearing probably doesn't mean anything when you first hear it, but you will continue to cherish it in your mind. You sleep on it; you have breakfast with it; you have lunch with it; you have dinner with it; you keep it with you all the time, which is both ordinary and special at the same time. It begins to haunt you, and you begin to have second thoughts, third thoughts, fourth thoughts, fifth thoughts, sixth thoughts, and on and on—until, when you have had a hundred thoughts, it begins to become real. It begins to make sense. That is the yeast concept.

In the traditional system of education which is Victorian style, you either learn on the spot or you don't learn. If you don't learn, you get hit; if you do learn, you are treated well. In fact, there have been students at Naropa Institute who have asked for some way of being rewarded if they do good work. But we do not believe in the reward system or in the punishment system. We believe in the yeast system. We educate you so that you can produce your own yeast. When we plant our yeast in you, you already have the basic goodies. You are an awake person and you have that kind of sacredness and artfulness in you already. Therefore we could develop something beyond that. Your basic artfulness allows you to be approached; you are yeastable already. So once the yeast is planted in your system, your yeastability begins to take effect and something begins to grow and develop. We put art and education together, they begin to work on each other. By putting the two of them together, people can relate with them and understand them.

We have never presented anything that no one can relate with. In fact, you'll be surprised to learn that there is nothing that a human being cannot relate with. Everything that we present and everything that your life presents is always workable. We never cut anything out, we never edit anything out. In fact, to our surprise, when we went through the list of what is not possible, what is not yeastable, we couldn't find anything. So we have art—the martial arts, psychology, Buddhist studies, and so on. We would like to add even more things, as many as we can, so that the whole situation can become much richer. What we are saying is that we can't find anything that we should exclude from our lives, from animal husbandry to the attainment of enlightenment. Everything is included in our education. If we could do enough fundraising, then we could actually perpetuate that kind of education. We feel that we can handle everything—absolutely everything. We also feel that students can handle everything. Therefore the spirit of Naropa Institute is that vast mind—mind that is both vast and deep.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I don't think I should say too much. I don't want to confuse you further. We could have a good discussion, if anybody would like to ask any questions or make any comments.

Question: It seems to me that art is mind and education is environment, and I really wonder why all these people are here.

Vajracharya: Well, I think that art is environment, if I may contradict you. I would like to use Buddhist logic, if I may. The concept of art is like the traditional abhidharma analysis of the six organs of the body: sight, smell, touch, hearing, and so on. Arising from those sense organs you have the sense of vision, the sense of hearing, the sense of smell, the sense of touch, and some kind of emotion in your heart and in your brain. So it's all very much a mind situation, because you see things and you hear things, when you see things it begins to become art. You can rearrange or not rearrange whatever you see or whatever you hear—it's mind's world. Education is also, interestingly, environmental. Education is largely a matter of following a schedule and working with a particular discipline. You could say that this room is an educational room because it is an environment. Everybody possesses two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth, and a body. So everybody is an educatee, someone who responds to educational situations. We have a container and that which is contained put together, which makes Naropa Institute.

Q: Rinpoche, a couple of years ago you said that people who made egotistical works of art were only adding to the world's pollution. You said, "How long can people go on creating more junk in the world?" After I heard that I went into a creative block that lasted about a year and a half [*Laughter*] and my feeling was that it would be wrong to try to work as an artist until I had achieved some kind of semienlightenment, or some kind of clarity and lack of confusion. I wonder how that concept applies to what you're saying now.

V: I think it's very simple. The production of junk art is the result either of trying to prove yourself or trying to find out who will buy your trip. That is very ugly: it's individualistic and homemade in the worst sense. Finally you begin to smell your personal fart and your personal sneeze and your hiccups and your vomit which permeate your work of art. That kind of art is not very elegant, and it's not very helpful to anybody. Who would like to go downhill with you and join your depression and mingle with your odor?

Q: Well it seems that if you are creating spontaneously, anything is liable to surface.

V: You see I don't regard that kind of art as spontaneous. It is somewhat calculated.

Q: I think that in my own case it's very calculated in some way.

V: It's that way with everybody. Artists are often very calculating. They're so smart that they have already researched the business world. They have already looked into who will buy their works of art, which is too bad and a great shame, a tremendous shame. We could do better than that. Once upon a time, in the sixties or maybe the forties, a heavy display of neurosis and insanity was very fashionable. People thought it was extraordinary when somebody could come up with the greatest neurosis yet, the greatest hell yet. Fortunately, that time is past. People began to realize the aftereffects of that approach, which is that a lot of people were hurt by that and suffered. Therefore they didn't want to jump on their own razor blade again. So this situation is very opportune: a work of art could be presented very sanely and very well. We have a tremendous opportunity in this era. We could learn a negative lesson from the previous era, and along with that we could also project the good we have learned.

Q: The only thing that still confuses me is how the artist can draw his own conclusion about the purity or the honesty of what he's doing.

V: He can simply relate to his own wakefulness, his basic goodness. He can do that. Nobody here is all that extreme anyway: everybody here is very decent and that says a lot actually. You can do it. I feel very encouraged.

Q: I am too. Thank you.

V: Thank you very much. Please relax tonight. Don't discuss all this too much: just forget it altogether. [*Laughter*] Have a good sleep, and see what happens tomorrow morning.

A public talk given at Naropa Institute by Vajracharya the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche on June 24, 1979.

Empowerment

THE LITURGY OF tantric empowerment heard on the record *Empowerment* was recorded in 1974 during the remarkable visit to the United States of the Tibetan spiritual king, His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa. On that occasion, accompanied by a number of his monks, the Gyalwa Karmapa traveled through the country, visiting and blessing, and performing rites of empowerment for large, and in many cases specially prepared, groups of people. The selections presented are highlights of those rites, some of them recorded live and some under the more favorable recording conditions of a studio.

Through the Ceremony of the Vajra Crown, His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa communicates the power and blessing of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, of which he is the head. The ceremony begins with a prolonged supplication to His Holiness requesting him to assume his transcendental form as Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. In response, he begins to chant the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM. While repeating the mantra, His Holiness places the Vajra Crown on his head, completing the link with his transcendental aspect and also with the audience. Radiating compassion, His Holiness transmits the energy and intelligence of the awakened state of mind to all who are prepared to receive it. His Holiness then removes the Crown and the monks pray for the benefit of all sentient beings and that the mind of the patron who sponsored the ceremony be attuned to the dharma.

In Buddhism, religious chanting developed out of reading and memorizing sutras or Buddhist texts in order to provide a kind of continual recollection of the teachings. As you read aloud, the words of the Bud-

dha reflect in your mind. So in general, chanting is not regarded as particularly devotional or invocational—you simply read aloud so you can hear yourself. And as you read, a natural rhythm develops without any deliberate attempt to chant a particular tune. This is the kind of chanting heard in the Ceremony of the Vajra Crown and in other rituals when the visualization is described.

Other sections of a ritual or sadhana—invocation, offering, praise—have their own rhythms and melodies which are repeated throughout the section. These melodies were composed at various times by teachers of the spiritual lineage, arising out of their personal feelings or experiences of unity with particular deities. These then became traditional ways of chanting certain sections of sadhanas. Actually, there are only a very few traditional ways of chanting a given section of a sadhana within one sect or school of Tibetan Buddhism. When a new sadhana is written, a traditional offering chant is borrowed for the new offering section, a traditional invocation chant for the new invocation section and so on.

The deities or gurus visualized during the ceremonies are not regarded as external entities. Rather, they embody particular principles of energy or qualities of being. Peaceful and wrathful deities are aspects of the awakened state of mind; demons and evil spirits are neurotic tendencies and confused ways of dealing with the phenomenal world. When done properly and with the right attitude, the visualization of deities provides insight into the psychological processes which they personify—insight which has power to catalyze the psychological transformation which is the goal of the whole Buddhist path, the realization of one's own basic sanity.

The practice of visualization is a part of various types of rites, including abhishekas or empowerments. In the visualization of the Karma Pakshi abhisheka, the participants visualize a mandala with Karma Pakshi at the center and various other figures surrounding him. Karma Pakshi, the second Karmapa, is a manifestation of the awakened state of mind which is already within us, as well as a representative of the lineage of teachers through whom the realization of that state of mind has been transmitted. By identifying with him, the student is included in the mandala, properly accepted into the family of the lineage. But this is not like being initiated into a tribe or accepted into a closed circle; rather the student is introduced by the teacher into the universe. The universe is not a big tribe or a big ego. It is just open space. The teacher empowers the student so

that he can enter the enlarged universe. The excerpt heard on the album occurs when the visualization has been established. Playing the hand drum and bell (damaru and drilbu), His Holiness calls upon the practitioners to become part of the mandala and also calls upon the transcendental aspect of the mandala to enter into it. The hand drum and bell are tantric symbols representing the masculine and feminine energy principles. They are regarded as the most sacred instruments of all.

Except for the damaru and drilbu which were borrowed from the Indian tradition, the instruments used in Tibetan monastic music derive historically from the military band. In the time of the great-great-grandson of king Trisong Detsen *(khri srong lde btsan;* flourished eighth century), there was a battle in which many people were killed. The king, feeling repentant and wishing to tone down the arrogance of the army, gave the military bands to the monasteries as an offering, to be used solely for peaceful purposes. Thus the oboelike gyaling *(rgya ling)* was originally used to send messages, much like a Western bugle. Many of the instrumental patterns still in use derive from the military music.

Set patterns played by the instruments are associated with beginning and ending particular sections of chanting—for example, the invocation or offering sections. In sadhanas connected with wrathful deities such as mahakalas, the chanting is often accompanied by drum and cymbals. The long trumpet, *ragdungchen* (not heard on the recording), and the short trumpet, *kangling*, are also connected with wrathful deities; they generally are played along with the drums and cymbals. The gyaling is associated with peaceful deities and also with the idea of devotion. It plays written-out melodies not related directly to the rhythm of the other instruments which, nonetheless, may be playing at the same time.

Abhishekas empower the student to perform rites and sadhanas involving identification with particular gurus or deities. The second side of this record contains four excerpts from a three-and-one-half hour rite relating to the mahakala principle. This principle can only be evoked by those already empowered to do so. Mahakalas are protectors of the teachings who guard the practitioner from sidetracks and deceptions on the path to enlightenment.

The first excerpt consists of visualization of a mahakala, invocation of his transcendental aspect, and offering to him. The second excerpt begins with visualization of the six-armed mahakala, the wrathful manifestation of Avalokiteshvara. This mahakala is the protector particularly

of the six-yoga teaching of Nigu and of the Geluk order. After the visualization, his mantra is repeated silently, followed by an offering to him. Mantra plays an important part in communicating with the power of a particular deity; it is a means of getting in touch with the basic qualities he embodies and identifying with them.

When people succumb to corruption, and monks and practitioners break their vows of practice, the mahakalis, female manifestations of the protector principle, become angered. They create warfare, famine, sickness, and chaos as reminders and warnings to return to the path. In the third excerpt, the mahakalis are beseeched to fulfill the first karma—the enlightened action of pacification, causing both physical and psychological imbalance to subside. Then the mantra of Pernagchen, the principal mahakala of this particular rite, is repeated. Pernagchen is the special protector of the Karma Kagyü lineage.

In the last excerpt, the spirits of the enemies of the teachings—evil energies, confusion, and obstacles on the path to enlightenment—are captured and brought into the torma, sculptured offerings made of barley flour and butter. They are then offered to the mahakala in fulfillment of the fourth karma, the enlightened action of destruction—the annihilation of confusion and obstacles. Having destroyed all enemies, the practitioners repeat a manta of Manjushri, the bodhisattva of transcendental knowledge, and clap their hands to invoke his protection from the rebounds of this wrathful action. They may now receive the siddhi or power of mahakala, the enriching quality of psychological wealth. The rite ends with wishes for good fortune accompanied by fanfare and celebration.

Basically, Tibetan liturgical music functions as part of the setting of a ritual rather than having an independent life of its own. The music does provide a lot of power, particularly in sections where wrathful deities are invoked or evil spirits are exorcised. It is not necessarily the sound as such which has a particular effect; rather, different kinds of rhythms and melodies are associated with certain states of mind—feelings of longing or devotion or power. For instance, in Western music, Wagnerian music is associated with a feeling of heroism and power while Haydn's trumpet concerto suggests a different kind of mood altogether. In Tibetan monastic music, the deeper-sounding instruments are connected with grandiosity and power while the higher-pitched sounds are somewhat connected with the idea of devotion. The music does evoke these states

of mind in people, but there is no independent magical power in the sounds themselves. An analogy can be made with paintings of mandalas. Staring at such a painting will not provide any profound psychological experience—the painting is just a map of a three-dimensional building which is supposed to be visualized. If one has not had proper training under a competent teacher and does not know the actual technical details of the specific mandala, there is no particular effect other than a sense of the exotic. In the same way, for Westerners who lack the training to understand the ritual, Tibetan liturgical music would tend to be just exotic sound. To be sure it gives us some feeling, but that is partly because of its foreignness. This could be compared to the experience of many Tibetans arriving in the West upon first hearing the sounds of automobiles. A car goes by, a huge bundle of energy with a deep roar and an occasional higher pitch when gears are shifted. In passing by, it carries a trail of wind—extraordinarily powerful. This experience is magical from a certain point of view—intense noise does create a state of mind. But due to the foreignness of it, the Tibetan has an impression of that sound which is very far from its actual psychological place in the Western context. In the same way, Westerners hearing the, for them, strange and powerful sounds of the Tibetan liturgy can develop interpretations of it which are remote from the intentions of its practitioners. The music of these rituals is not meant, by itself, to have great effects. It is merely an accompaniment to the general psychological process of the rite. It is the understanding of the rite, together with the skill in practicing it which comes of long psychological training, that forms the main thread of this process.

INTRODUCTION TO
Disciples of the Buddha

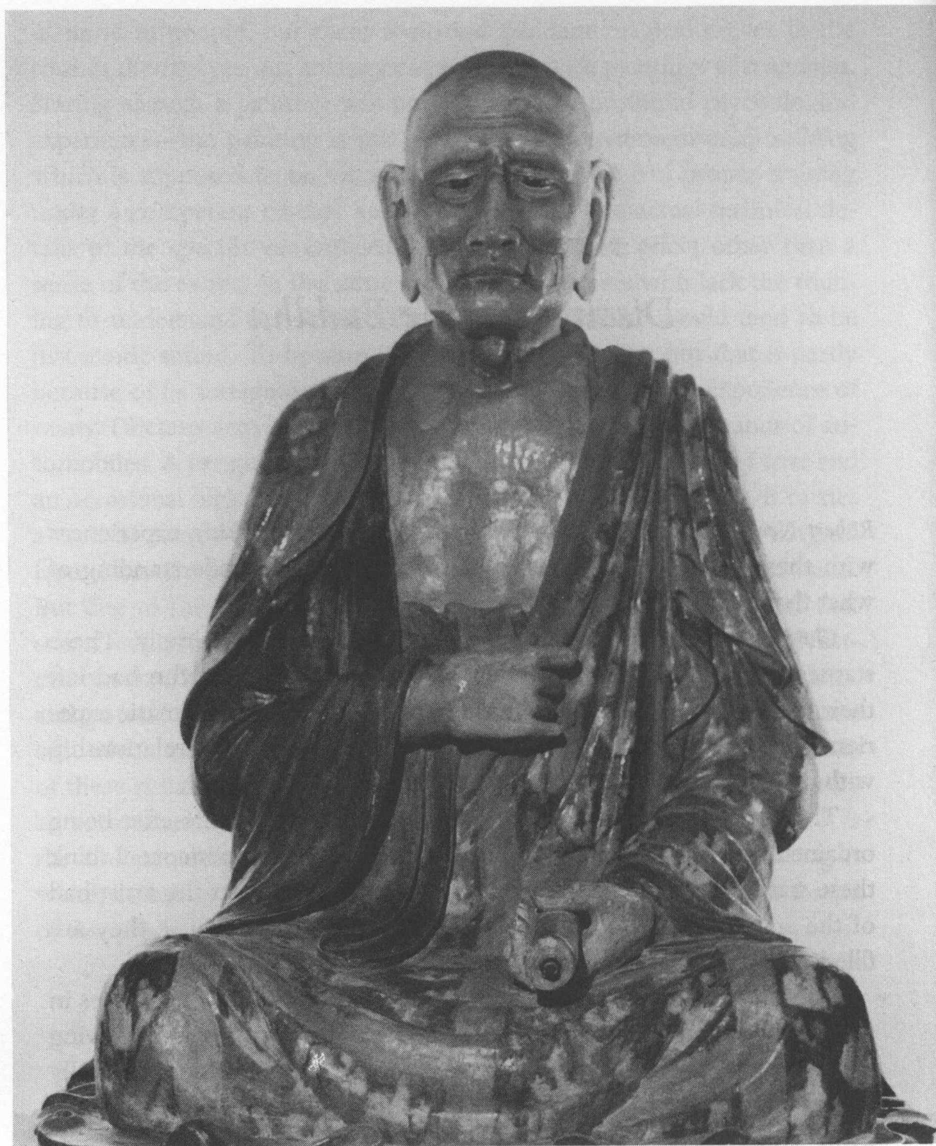
Robert Newman: Many people in America have had striking experiences with these I-chou lohan* statues but there's limited understanding of what the statues are and how they were made.

Chögyam Trungpa: I think we have to look at it very simply. These statues represent, according to the tradition, individuals who had left their homes, and before they left, there had been a lot of traumatic experiences of pain and suffering. They then established their relationship with their teacher, in this case the Buddha himself.

The sense of simplicity they experienced in monastic life after being ordained by the Buddha brought a sense of nonverbal experience. I think these statues are expressions of nonverbal experience that the artist had of the state of arhathood. The statues are powerful because they are filled with a state of experience.

These individuals had left their homes and established themselves in a monastic situation, which in the early days of Buddhism was just living in the jungle or meditating in a cave. They became healthier physically and psychologically. These particular beings represented had that sane living situation and also had the sanity of communication with the Buddha. We could say these images present the particular realization of Buddha's sanity in his direct disciples.

**Lohan* is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit word *arhat,* meaning disciple of the Buddha. It also means a stage or state in the path of meditation.



Lohan Two from Disciples of the Buddha: Living Images of Meditation *(Cool Grove Press).*

COURTESY OF ROBERT NEWMAN

Robert Newman: Would you say that these are images of vipashyana* meditation?

Chögyam Trungpa: I think you could say that the expressions of the statues are very definite. The practice of meditation becomes a day-to-day life situation from the shamatha experience to the vipashyana experience. Therefore many of the postures we see the statues in are very casual ones.

The natural habit of meditation has already been built up and they feel a continuous vipashyana experience. They don't have to pose for it. They have become used to just being that way. These images are actual portraits of how they handle themselves. They also illustrate the particularly Chinese tradition of reverence and respect for teachers. The flowing robes and powerful expressions are comparable to imperial portraits, like a king or monarch who doesn't have to work to improve his subjects. He just handles himself very casually. I would say of the artist that he may have experienced some practice of meditation and some insight. But these images are done with a sense of awe and reverence, in a very sacred application. And so the images are very human and at the same time kind of superhuman.

Robert Newman: I think the particularly human quality of the images is most striking to people. The human, lifelike qualities create a shock of confrontation in space, something like a mirror. So if the artist was experiencing awe, he was doing so in making extremely human images, faces very related to his own.

Chögyam Trungpa: I think so. The artist has obviously experienced the living Buddhism that is always present, as well as certain teachers with Buddha-like qualities, so that the teachings are no myth, but a very real experience. The sense of awe and respect comes together with a sense of ineffableness, an enigmatic quality. The artist would have loved to have experienced that directly, but could only do it by making these portraits. Something is not available to him, but at the same time it is very

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*Shamatha-vipashyana: *Shamatha* (Skt.; Tib. *shi-ne*) means "calm abiding," "remaining in quiescence." This is the widely used practice of calming the mind through various concentration techniques, such as following the breath, in order to shift attention from mind to open awareness. From the concentration practices of shamatha, effortless vipashayana meditation naturally arises, a spontaneous "clear seeing," "panoramic awareness." *Vipashyana* is the direct practice of "extraordinary insight."

available to him and almost frightening. A kind of balance takes place. And of course the whole thing is very cultural and hierarchical in approach.

In Indian Buddhism there is less of a hierarchical attitude. Becoming a Buddhist meant transcending the caste system. But when Buddhism entered China, the priest class became very powerful. Buddhism was invited to China by the emperor, the great scholars, and the great prime ministers. Traditionally, the abbots are the only people who can put their hands on the emperor's head to bless him. That's known as rajaguru, and such power is never questioned. Even if you question it, there is a sense of mystery. But traditionally that mystery is thrown back in the accomplishments of a person in his life, what he does. The artist achieved what he wanted to achieve.

Robert Newman: The depiction of sumptuous robes on the lohans gives them a stately quality while the training they represent calls for simplicity. Do they give the sense of both church power and profound simplicity?

Chögyam Trungpa: I think so. In the traditional story, the arhats were invited to China by the Emperor, who asked them, "What can I offer you?" and an arhat answered, "New monastic robes." The Emperor felt that it was a very humble request. He began to measure the bodies of the arhats, and the measuring became completely limitless. In trying to make robes, the whole stock of fabrics in the imperial palace ran out, and he had to tax the local people. He told them to bring not only the traditional yellow- and red-color cloth, but to bring cloth of any color. So traditionally lohans don't have strictly monastic colors in their clothing. And that comes from a story of the arhats performing a miracle.

Sets of arhat statues were also made in Tibet, traditionally. They were usually placed in the shrine of the sangha. There was a shrine of the Buddha, which has the biggest buddha statue, usually off the assembly hall. Then there was the shrine of the dharma, which contained the Tripitaka books. The shrine of the sangha had the arhats and bodhisattvas, particularly the arhats. The hall was huge, and the arhats were set in porcelain caves, made especially to accommodate them.

Robert Newman: Yes, like sculptural niches.

Chögyam Trungpa: Sculptural niches, yes.

Robert Newman: Is it true that in Tibet sometimes the disciples were rendered in realistic portraits, like the I-chou lohans?

I think that there's a lot of emphasis on the portrait of the guru in the Tibetan tradition of arhat paintings and statues. The same is true of the Eighty-four Siddhas.* They usually are depicted like Indian men, with big noses and hair on the chest and unshaven or whatever. There is an element of eccentricity in them.

Robert Newman: In the Chinese tradition of arhats there are racial mixtures. These I-chou lohan statues seem overtly Chinese but there are definitely Aryan features.

Chögyam Trungpa: Both in China and Tibet the Aryan features are considered somewhat superior. The Buddha had come from Aryan India, and so Aryan also meant somewhat superhuman. The bodhisattvas are much more stylized than the arhats or the Eighty-four Siddhas. The idea in the portraitlike work is that there is a sense of lineage, a sense of personal connection. I think people take delight in a true story, a living person who attained enlightenment. Sometimes it's more refreshing than mythical bodhisattvas or other deities, herukas, or dakinis. There's a sense of freshness in the portraits of gurus because the guru is a link between the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and herukas and the human world.

Robert Newman: I get the sense that the statues represent a face-to-face situation in the monastery.

Chögyam Trungpa: I think so. There's a sense of claustrophobia, mirrors mocking your ego. And there's also a sense of simplicity. You can't get away. You can't play games.

Robert Newman: The Zen monastic process, you've said, wears down the intellectual mind, almost cuts out intellectual mind, cuts down the ego to allow prajna to function.

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*A siddha (Skt.) is a man or woman who has developed supernormal powers (siddhis) through meditation realization. The Eighty-four Siddhas were Indian Buddhist masters who can be considered the founders of the siddha lineages that passed into Tibet from the eighth through the eleventh centuries. The list of the Eighty-four Siddhas as well as details of their lives varies, like the lohan-arhats of China and Tibet. ["Siddha" is also sometimes termed "mahasiddha," great siddha.]

Chögyam Trungpa: Yes, I think that's the point. When we talk about space we aren't talking only of aesthetic space. We're referring to someone's deep loss of ground, which creates real space, real emptiness, and at the same time that brings a sense of dignity and some sense of power.

Robert Newman: Would you consider the I-chou lohan statues to be definite representations of initial shunyata realization?

Chögyam Trungpa: Yes. The situation is that when you've achieved what is known as the arhat state, you've destroyed the enemy, which means you become a conqueror of ego. You've destroyed conflicting emotions, which automatically brings the sense of shunyata. The arhat experience is the prajna, the sword, which cuts through ego, bringing the experience of shunyata. There's a definite link with becoming a warrior.

Robert Newman: Aren't conquering self and making friends with oneself interrelated? Doesn't the process contain self-exposure?

Chögyam Trungpa: Conquering obstacles of ego is not so much a relief as gaining a new sense of power, a new sense of openness, which brings an all-seeing quality. What is known as mahavipashyana experience automatically becomes the vanguard of prajna experience. The presentation of arhats or lohans here is like a sword with an ornamental handle and guard. However, the sword blade is very naked. I would say that the lohans' realization is perhaps at the level of the first bhumi, the bhumi of joy. And I think that, from there onward, some of the mahasiddhas would be the images of further realization. There's a little craziness in the mahasiddha iconography, as there is in this arhat energy. The craziness is there from the first bhumi onward to the vajrayana, which is another development of the iconography.

Robert Newman: Could you speak of these lohans in terms of the four noble truths?

Chögyam Trungpa: I think these statues embody the whole thing, the four noble truths. There is a sense of being on the path and a sense of experiencing the cessation of suffering. Knowing the four noble truths simultaneously depends on seeing from all viewpoints. I think the artist achieved this work of art because he's true to himself. He just executed it as simply and as impressively as possible, from his own experience of the practice of meditation.

Robert Newman: Do you know of any other works of Chinese art that represent higher mahayana meditation? If this is the level of the first bhumi, can you think of any Chinese Buddhist works of art that represent a higher degree of realization?

Chögyam Trungpa: Well, there's one of the kinds of bodhisattva statues that have expressions of compassion and gentleness, but with immovability and solidness. The bodhisattva images are highly ornamented and less monastic. They have a less contemplative expression. There's more of a kind of inquisitiveness of how to conduct compassion toward a person. An interesting point about the Chinese expression of the bodhisattvas is that they often have Chinese facial structure, bone structure, but at the same time the costume is always Indian. In Tibet, there were eight bodhisattva sculptures carved in a giant rock that was close to my monastery. They were dressed in imperial costumes, actually wearing imperial hats. Eight ancient emperors. The bodhisattvas become interesting. But I think that if a person would really like to work traditionally with the teachings, this lohan imagery should be studied first. First completely understand the arhat sculptures or the principle of the sculptures. Then, after that, probably comes a glimpse of how bodhisattvas work. And then there are the various tantric deities in Tibet and Japan. There's a continuity in all this.

Robert Newman: Maybe one last question, about the stillness quality of the lohans. Are the statues expressive of stillness?

Chögyam Trungpa: I think the sense of stillness comes from the sense of solidness. Although these statues are iconographically informed, with heads turned or holding robes, at the same time there's a sense of definite solidness, a sense of immobility. If you see a blade of grass, it's not an image of solidness, because at any moment it can be flickered by wind. But there are statues that have a sense of dignity and power that present a great sense of sanity, of immovability. It could be a very small statue or it could be a big one, and it could have that quality.



Appendices



INTRODUCTION TO

First Thought Best Thought

As lineage holder in Ear-whispered Kagyü transmission of Tibetan Buddhist practice of Wakefulness, Chögyam Trungpa is "Rinpoche" or "Precious Jewel" of millenial practical information on attitudes and practices of mind speech & body that Western Poets over the same millenia have explored, individually, fitfully, as far as they were able—searching thru cities, scenes, seasons, manuscripts, libraries, backalleys, whorehouses, churches, drawing rooms, revolutionary cells, opium dens, merchant's rooms in Harrar, salons in Lissadell.

Rimbaud, drawing on the Magician Eliphas Levi & hashishien backalleys of Paris, rediscovered "Alchemy of the Verb" and other Western magics including home-made Colors of Vowels & "long reasoned derangement of all the senses" as part of his scheme to arrive at the Unknown as Poet-seer. His conception of Poet as Visionary Savant is unbeatable ambition no Western poet can bypass, tho as in the lives of Rimbaud & Kerouac, mature suffering, the First Noble Truth of existence, may be the destined end of ambitious magic. Some Reality is arrived at: "Charity is that key—This inspiration proves that I have dreamed! . . . I who called myself angel or seer, exempt from all morality, I am returned to the soil with a duty to seek and rough reality to embrace! Peasant!"

Rimbaud, still a model of the Beautiful Poet, concluded his life's last year with the following letters: "In the long run our life is a horror, an endless horror! What are we alive for?" . . . "My life is over, all I am now is a motionless stump." Generations later poets are still trying to change Reality with the Revolution of the Word, a XX Century preoccupation drawing on Western gnostic sources.

Some compromise with Absolute Truth had to be made in XX Century poetics: W. C. Williams thru Kerouac, poets were willing to work with relative truth, the sight at hand, accurate perception of appearance, accurate reportage of consciousness—although Hart Crane & some Rock Poets continued to force the issue of Self-Immolation as means of becoming One with phenomena.

As part of the aesthetics of working with relative truth, an American idiom developed (born out of the spacious pragmatism of Whitman in dealing with his own Ego): The acceptance of actual poetic (poesis: making) behavior of the mind as model, subject, & measure of literary form and content. Mind is shapely, Art is shapely. Gertrude Stein's style thus merges literary artifact with present consciousness during the time of composition. Put another way: the sequence of events of poet's mind, accidents of mind, provide the highlights, jumps & Plot of Poetry. As to the Muse, "She's there, installed amid the kitchenware" as Whitman celebrated the change from Absolute Heroic to Relative Honesty in poetic method. Thus we inherited our world of poetry in XX Century.

Thirst for some Absolute Truth still lurks behind this shift, thus Bullfighting, Drugs, God, Communism, Realpolitik or Revolution, Drink, Suburb or Bohemia, Sex, grassroots communalism, ecology or Amerindian ground, blasts of Eternal Vision, Death's Skull, even various Apocalypses or Extraterrestrial Paranoias & delights recur as our preoccupation, and have been epic'd. Brave energies of fear, joy or anomia, not much certainty; yet there's been honest effort to display what can be seen of naked mind, and that's led to an amazingly open style of Poetry which includes snow-blinding Sierras and rain-diamonded traffic lights, as mind's-eye does. An international style, based on facts, has emerged, perhaps the most relaxed poetic mode ever. Still, no certainty emerges but ultimate suffering, accelerating change, and perhaps some vast glimpse of universal soullessness. Has the poetic Seer failed? Or perhaps succeeded at arriving at a place of beat bleakness where the ego of Poetry is annihilated?

At last! To the Rescue! Carrying the panoply of 25 centuries of wakened mind-consciousness "where glorious radiant Howdahs/are being carried by elephants/through groves of flowing milk/past paradises of Waterfall/into the valley of bright gems/be rubying an antique ocean/

floor of undiscovered splendor/ in the heart of un happiness."* And Whozat? The poet of absolute Sanity and resolution, "having drunk the hot blood of the ego." The author is a reincarnated Tibetan Lama trained from age 2 in various ancient practices aimed at concentrating attention, focusing perception, minding thought-forms to transparency, profounding awareness, vasting consciousness, annihilating ego, & immolating ego-mind in phenomena: a wizard in control of day-dream, conscious visualization & thought projection, vocal sound vibration, outward application of insight, practice of natural virtues, and a very admiral of oceanic scholarship thereof.

The dramatic situation of someone who has realized the World as pure mind, & gone beyond attachment to ego to return to the world & work with universal ignorance, confront the spiritual-materialist day-dream of Western world—and tell it in modernist poetry—provides the historic excitement this book puts in our laps.

To focus on one aspect of the drama, consider the progression of style, from early poems adapted out of Tibetan formal-classic modes, to the free-wheeling Personism improvisations of the poems of 1975, which reflect Guru mind's wily means of adapting techniques of Imagism, post-surrealist humor, modernist slang, subjective frankness & egoism, hip "fingerpainting," & tenderhearted spontaneities as adornments of tantric statement. We see respect & appreciation given to the "projective field" of modern Western poetry; this is a teaching in itself, which few past "Gurus" have been able to manifest in their mistier mystic musings. Something has jerked forward here, into focus, visible, in our own language: rare perceptions dealt with in our own terms.

By hindsight the classical style poems become precious exhibitions of cultural starting place & intention for the poet, Chögyam, "the stray dog."

For those familiar with advanced Buddhist practice & doctrine, the solidified symbolisms of early poems are significant teachings, or statements of method, attitude, & experience, as in "The Zen Teacher," where horse, boat and stick may represent Hinayana Mahayana & Vajrayana attitudes of wakefulness. Quite thrilling, unusual, to find a con-

*That's Kerouac's Wish-fulfilling gem, *Mexico City Blues*, 110th Chorus (New York: Grove Press, 1959).

temporary poet who's master of an ancient "system." Within my memory, it was Academically fashionable to say that the XX Century lacked the culture for great Poetry, not possessing, as Dante's time did, a "system" of cultural assumptions on which to hang an epic. But it seemed too late to go back and clothe the skeleton of God, tho Eliot, Claudel & others yearned nostalgic for such divine certainty.

Chögyam Trungpa, however, does have a Classical system working for him to make "the snakeknot of conceptual mind uncoil in air." Vajrayana Buddhist symbolism is at his disposal, including the notion of "Absolute Truth"—a property hitherto unclaimable since Plato kicked the poets out of his republic. Tho' Keats did propose redeeming Truth as Beauty. Blake created a symbolic sacred world in many ways parallel to Vajrayana. How do other poet friends look in this light, faced with contest from within their ranks by poet who's also lineage holder of the most esoteric teachings of the East? Will Auden seem amateur, pursuing testy quasi-christian personal conclusions? Does Eliot quote Buddha, Krishna & Christ like a country vicar? How do I sit, charlatan pedant full of resentful Ginsberghood, posed by contemporary media as cultural Guru? Does Yeats gasp like a beached fish in the thin air of Theosophy's "Secret Doctrines" version of the Great East? Whereas "Chögyam writing a poem is like a king inspecting his Soldiers." Well, Well!

What will poetry readers think of that bardic boast? Diamond Macho the *Kalevala* song men wouldn't match, tho' they might threaten to sing each other into a swamp.* What image of Poet! What would angelic Shelly've said? What would Blake warn? "I must make a system of my own, or be enslaved by another man's"? On Mt. Ida the Muses look up astonished by this bolt of lightning thru blue cloudless sky.

This book is evidence of a Buddha-natured child taking first verbal steps age 35, in totally other language direction than he spoke age 10, talking side of mouth slang: redneck, hippie, chamber of commerce, good citizen, Oxfordian aesthete slang, like a dream Bodhisattva with thousand eyes & mouths talking turkey.

Thus poems of June 1972 approach the theme of personal love using open Western forms and "first thought best thought" improvisatory technique—statements which mediate between the formality of Dharma

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**The Kalevala*, tr. F.P. MaGoun Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), poem 3, 21–330 . . . "up to his teeth behind a rotten tree trunk."

Master and a man immersed in Relative Truth. Phrases return and re-echo in mind: "Take a thistle to bed,/And make love to it." The following "Letter to Marpa," classical theme, is done in smooth mixture of old and new styles: "Ordering Damema to serve beer for a break." If you know the wife of Marpa (translator and early founder of Kagyü Lineage) & Trungpa Rinpoche, this poem's a historic prophecy of transplantation of lineage to America in American terms: awesome knowledge & self-aware humor are explicit in the poem.

"Nameless Child": "hearing the pearl dust crunch between his teeth" is startling statement of egolessness, "unborn nature" of consciousness, done in traditional style. The next experiment is with gnomic haiku-like riddles, developing 7 November 1972 into precise American style "red wheelbarrow" snapshots. "Skiing in a red & blue outfit, drinking cold beer," etc. Thru these we see ordinary mind of the poet, whose specialty as Eastern Teacher is Ordinary Mind.

Years later ordinary egoless mind says in response to anxiety-ridden ecology freaks, "Glory be to the rain/That brought down/Concentrated pollution/On the roof of my car/In the parking lot." Amazing chance to see his thought process step by step, link by link, cutting through solidifications of opinion & fixations on "Badgoodgood/goodbadbad" & attachment to this and that humorless image the poems July 1974, including "Ginsberg being Pedantic."

This method of first-thought concatenations develops in a series of tipsy essays in modern style—some dealing with serious personal matters. By September 1974, in "Supplication to the Emperor," Ancient Wisdom Transmission heritage is wedded to powerful modern "surrealist" style.

These poems are dictated amidst an ocean of other activities including the utterance of masses of books of Dharma exposition—as the Tibetan imagery says "a mountain of jewels"—exactly true of this strange poet in our midst, noticing our "Aluminum-rim black leather executive chairs."

What's odd, adventurous, inventive, mind-blowing, is the combination of classical occasion (visit of head of Kagyü Order, His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa, to North America) treated in authentic post-Apollinaire recognizably American-minded style ("Supplication to the Emperor").

Poignant and powerful then, the re-echoes of liturgical style that reappear in 1974, the poet in midst of struggle with the flypaper of modern

centerless-minded poetics: (as in an unpublished text, "Homage to Samantabhadra," 11 November 1974).

> I am a mad yogi.
> Since I have no beginning, no end,
> I am known as the ocean of dharma.
> I am the primordial madman;
> I am primordially drunk.
> Since all comes from me,
> I am the only son of the only guru.

By February 1975, a series of poems in entirely modern style indicate absorption of the lively fashion of versifying developed in the U.S. after models of Christopher Smart & Apollinaire, & transmitted in U.S. '50s to '70s by Corso, the "List Poem" spoken of by Anne Waldman and others—see the cadenzas punning and joking on the word *Palm* (25 February 1975), the "best minds" commentary of the same day, and subsequent love poems. In "Dying Laughing" there's an ironic commentary on modern poetic mind, "scattered thoughts are the best you can do . . . That the whole universe/could be exasperated/And die laughing."

There follows a series of portraits—"characters" as T. S. Eliot termed certain of W. C. Williams' poems on persons—thumbnail sketches of his students, their natures exposed to X-ray humorous advice—"If you're going to tickle me, be gentle. . . . But titillating enough to stimulate my system with your feminine healthy shining well-trimmed nail just so . . ."

Of the famous situation of Guru playing with disciples this is rare honest private occasion made public where you can see the inside story & its humanity & innocence, its true teaching & bone quick insight. Tiny details of personality, irritating seen in greater space, along with tiny details of resolution of problems of egoic self-consciousness proposed by subjects of the portraits—this one composed March 1975:

> . . . jalapeño dumpling
> Bitten by Alice's white teeth,
> Which are lubricated by feminine saliva

There's an odd reminder of Kurt Schwitters's *Anne Blume* here, or: the love poem dated 7 March 1975:

As she turns her head
From the little irritation of long flowing hair
She says, Mmmm.
But on the other hand she is somewhat perturbed;
Not knowing whether she is glamorous or ugly

A number of successful complete poems follow, the poetic ground having been prepared, the improvisational practice having been taken seriously, thus "Victory Chatter" is fruition of poetic path begun consciously much earlier. The details in the mind of the "good general" of dharma battle are recognizable. A number of poems like "Missing the Point" have extra flavor of inside gossip on attitudes & thought processes of the professional teacher, "Lingering thought / Tells me / My private secretary is really drunk" & have sort of Chinese Royal tone; might've been written in 14th Century Kham slang. "RMDC": "Dead or alive, I have no regrets." An up-to-date playfulness develops, mind-plays of obvious charm, even naivete, as in writings by Marsden Hartley or Samuel Greenberg's not-well-known classics.

"Report from Loveland," July 1975: The whole dharma is given in Disneyesque parody of everyday perplexity's Bourgeois life. By that month's end, the writings are well-formed shapes with one subject. The "1135 10th St." lady friend poem is a series of exquisitely courteous & penetrant, yet funny, first thoughts, where mind's mixed with dharma and every noticed detail points in a unified direction. Can you, by following first thoughts, arrive at a rounded complete one-subject poem, but crazy-poetic still, like: "fresh air / Which turns into a well-cared-for garden / Free from lawn mowers and insecticides"?

In "Aurora 7 #11" the poet emerges complete whole, teacher & self, talking to the world his world, face to face, completely out of the closet poetically so to speak, without losing poetic dignity as Tantrick Lama & Guru: "Here comes Chögyie / Chögyie's for all / Take Chögyie as yours / Chögyam says: lots of love! / I'm yours!"

I must say, that there is something healthy about the American idiom as it's been charmed into being by Williams, Kerouac, Creeley and others, a frankness of person & accuracy to thought-forms & speech that may've been unheard of in other cultures, a freestyle stick-your-neck-out mortal humor of the "Far West." When the Great East enters this body speech & mind there is a ravishing combination of Total Anarchy & Total Discipline.

Well, has the transition been made, by this poet, from Absolute Truth expressed thru symbols ("riding on the white horse of Dharmata")* to Relative Truth nail'd down in devotional commitment to the American Ground he's set out to transvalue & conquer?—In the drama of this book, yes, the author Chögyam, with all his Vajra Perfections, is the drunk poet on his throne in the Rockies proclaiming "Chögyie is yours." What will Walt Whitman's expansive children do faced with such a Person?

ALLEN GINSBERG
Land O'Lakes, 1976
Boulder, 1983

**Rain of Wisdom,* tr. by Nālandā Translation Committee (Boulder & London: Shambhala Publications, 1980), p. 285, "The Spontaneous Song of the White Banner" by Chögyam Trungpa.

EDITOR'S PREFACE TO

First Thought Best Thought

The one hundred and eight poems published here, roughly in chronological order, are selected from among over four hundred composed by Vajracharya the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, between 1968—two years before his emigration from Great Britain to America—and the present year (1983). The majority of these poems were composed directly in English. The rest were written in Tibetan and then translated into English by the author. These translations were subsequently reviewed and, to varying degrees, revised by the Nālandā Translation Committee.

Seventeen poems and songs by Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche, composed prior to 1970, were previously published in *Mudra* (Shambhala, 1972). Several of the early selections in the present volume date from the same period as *Mudra*, but none are repetitions. Four devotional songs translated from the Tibetan appear in *The Rain of Wisdom* (Shambhala, 1980), two of which are republished here. A number of other poems have previously appeared elsewhere in a variety of anthologies and journals, especially in *Garuda* and the *Vajradhatu Sun*.

A minimum of annotation has been supplied. For clarification of Buddhist terms, concepts, and imagery, the reader is referred to Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's numerous published writings as well as works by others on the Buddhist teachings. To assist the reader in identifying certain topical references encountered in the poems, the following brief guide to significant persons and events is offered.

Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's childhood in Tibet, his rigorous training as a tulku or enlightened lineage holder in the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, and his perilous escape from Tibet following the Chinese

takeover of 1959 are graphically described in his autobiography *Born in Tibet* (Shambhala, 1977). The Epilogue to the third edition of that work describes Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's years in India, working with the Tibetan refugee community and encountering Western culture; in England, studying at Oxford; in Scotland, as spiritual director of the Samye Ling Tibetan Meditation Centre; and his work in North America up through the mid-seventies. The disruptive events that resulted in Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's departure from Great Britain to America are alluded to in several of the early poems collected here.

A chance encounter between Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche and Allen Ginsberg on a Manhattan street in 1970 (Ginsberg "stole" Trungpa's taxicab for his fatigued father) was the origin of a lasting and significant poetic colleagueship that grew to include encounters and friendships with many other American poets, and which found institutional expression in the creation in 1974 of the Jack Kerouac School of Poetics as a founding department of the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

Nineteen seventy-four also marked the first of three historic visits to North America by the "dharma king," His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, head of the Karma Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Each of these visits, as well as the untimely death of the Karmapa in November 1981, occasioned poems in this volume.

A milestone in Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's work of propagating buddhadharma in the West was his appointment in 1976 of an American-born disciple, Ösel Tendzin (Thomas Frederick Rich), as his Vajra Regent or dharma heir. A number of the poems celebrate, counsel, or admonish this spiritual son. Others are addressed to the poet's blood son, Ösel Mukpo, or to students, friends, admirers, or detractors. Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche makes regular use of the "occasional" poem, and this traditional and now much neglected form is well-represented in the present volume.

Many of the poems, even when not explicitly occasional, draw inspiration from events in the life of the two major institutions founded by Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche since his arrival in North America: Vajradhatu—an association of Buddhist meditation centers; and The Nalanda Foundation—a nonsectarian nonprofit educational foundation that includes the Naropa Institute. These events include the annual three-month Vajradhatu Seminary for seasoned Buddhist practitioners; the international Dharmadhatu Conferences at which executive committee

members from the numerous local practice centers in North America and Europe convene; Naropa Institute seminars and graduation ceremonies; and many others.

A prominent source of imagery for the poems—as for much of Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's teaching—is the tradition of the Kingdom of Shambhala, a Buddhist-inspired but also secular vision of enlightened society that underlies the Shambhala Training Program.

The poems composed in Tibetan are in traditional meters, consisting mostly of seven- or nine-syllable lines. Also traditional is the interweaving of prose and poetry, similar to the Japanese technique used by Bashō and others. As for the poems composed directly in English, they were in almost every case dictated to a secretary, most of them to this editor. A short description of the process involved may serve to illuminate the context of the poems and to give some indication of their place in Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche's overall work:

At the end of a long day of scheduled business—administrative meetings, individual or group audiences, perhaps a visit to a fledgling business venture, followed in the evening by a public talk or a community ceremony—late into the evening or even in the early hours of morning, Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche, just when his loyal but weary attendants think they are about to be released, declares, "Let's write a poem." Pen and paper are made ready. Then, perhaps with a few moments of silent thought, more likely with no pause at all, he commences to dictate. The dictation is unhesitating, at a rate as fast and upon occasion faster (alas!) than the scribe can record. At the conclusion of dictation, Rinpoche asks, "Are there any problems?" This leads to a quick review of any unclear or grammatically inconsistent passages. Perhaps a few changes, such as bringing persons or tenses into agreement, are made, rarely anything of substance—though in the process Rinpoche himself may be inspired to interject a new couplet or stanza. Then a title—often a title and subtitle—are supplied by the poet, and the scribe is called upon to read the newborn poem, in a strong voice and with good enunciation, to the small audience which typically is present on these occasions. More often than not, further poems reiterating this sequence of events will follow over the course of another hour or two, or three.

In compiling the present volume, Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche has guided the overall shape and contents. The editors' work has consisted primarily of rectifying punctuation and line structure; decisions in these matters

have necessarily been somewhat arbitrary on the editors' parts, but based on guidelines put forward over the years by the author.

Tibetan calligraphy for the facing-page bilingual selections was executed by Ven. Karma Thinley Rinpoche and by Lama Ugyen Shenpen, and their contribution is hereby gratefully acknowledged. The Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin took time out of his busy schedule for a complete reading of the penultimate version of the manuscript, and his guidance is acknowledged with gratitude. A continuing and crucial contribution has been made by the Editorial Department of Vajradhatu, consisting of Carolyn Gimian, Editor-in-Chief; Sarah Levy; and Richard Roth. Mr. Roth in particular was instrumental in the later stages of the project. Of the numerous others who have worked over the years in recording, typing, editing, and preserving the poems, only a portion can be acknowledged here: Beverley H. Webster, Connie Berman, Berkley McKeever, Donna Holm, Emily Hilburn, Helen Green, Sherab Kohn, Marvin Casper, and John Baker. Particular recognition is also due to the Nālandā Translation Committee, and especially to its executive director Larry Mermelstein, for their work in translating or revising earlier translations of the Tibetan selections. The author in his own preface has already acknowledged Allen Ginsberg, without whose persistent encouragement and generosity neither the poems themselves nor this volume would have taken form as here presented. Finally, I would like to thank publisher Samuel Bercholz equally for his patience and his impatience in fostering and forwarding this undertaking.

The unique and precious opportunity provided to me, as to others, of working intimately with Ven. Trungpa Rinpoche is an incalculable gift and beyond the poor power of our gratitude to acknowledge. Through the blessings of his transcendent wisdom and compassion, may our slight efforts be transmuted into benefit for all beings.

David I. Rome

EDITOR'S AFTERWORD TO

Timely Rain

Looking into the world
I see alone a chrysanthemum,
Lonely loneliness,
And death approaches.
Abandoned by guru and friend,
I stand like the lonely juniper
Which grows among rocks,
Hardened and tough.
Loneliness is my habit—
I grew up in loneliness.
Like a rhinoceros
Loneliness is my companion—
I converse with myself.

[Looking into the World]

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche wrote these lines in Scotland in November of 1969. He was thirty years old and at the nadir of his career. It had been ten years since he fled his homeland in the face of materialist, totalitarian armies bent on destroying the age-old culture that had blessed him with its profoundest wisdom and highest privilege, training him to serve as a spiritual prince. A few months earlier he had "blacked out" at the wheel of his car (drunk, we may guess) and suffered a near-fatal crash that left him permanently paralyzed on his left side. He took this as a message. His response: to abandon his Buddhist monk's robes and his monastic persona and to elope with a beautiful English teenager. Such behavior outraged and alienated Western patrons as well as friends and colleagues

in the Tibetan community. It was a bleak time. And, as he had done several times already in his young life, Trungpa was preparing to leave behind everything familiar, except for his sixteen-year-old bride, and cross the great water to an unknown continent.

It was a nadir from which he would rise during the next ten years to become one of the most original and influential figures in the transfusion of Eastern influences into Western life that made the 1970s a defining cultural moment. By 1976, from his headquarters in Colorado, Trungpa was writing:

> Glorious year for my work.
> Glorious diamond for my business.
> Glorious gurus visited me.
> What could go wrong, Chögyie?
>
> [Aurora 7 (# 1)]

Yet despite the triumphs and the recognition and the very real accomplishments, the rhinoceros of loneliness was never far from Trungpa's door. It was the existential ground to which he returned again and again. Nowhere is this more clear than in his poetry. Loneliness is the touchstone at the back of all the masks or personae that Trungpa puts on over the years as he continually reinvents himself, from "stray dog" to "wild duck" to "hailstorm," "sharp bamboo dagger," "general," "king," "ship sailing through icebergs," "tiger," "flaming vajra," to the poignant image of an aging king taking his medications "as prescribed by the physicians," and reviewing past successes and failures from his porcelain throne as he observes "that yellow dye sitting on white paper / As it flushes down the efficient American plumbing system."

Trungpa Rinpoche was remarkable in his total lack of need for solitude; indeed there was virtually not a moment, asleep or awake, when there were not others in his immediate presence—students, attendants, lovers, administrators. His tolerance for the constant proximity of others with their hungers and "colorful trips" was perhaps a product of his training in the close quarters of the monastery, as well as of his vocation as a bodhisattva. Behind it, though, one sensed that he had early on learned how to be "alone with others," that indeed he never departed from his own essential aloneness. This was why he could do the most

private things in the presence of others, such as composing out loud the intimate utterances of his poems, with no sense of inhibition or interruption.

From a Western point of view, we may suppose that Trungpa's loneliness began at birth when his father abandoned the family, though Trungpa himself regarded this as a normal feature of the nomadic peasant culture into which he was born (and another father soon appeared). A more drastic severing of natural human bonds (again, from a modern perspective) was his removal from his native place and his mother's daily care at the age of two to be raised in the male cloister of the monastery. In any case, at age nineteen he was violently ejected from the matrix of a basically medieval society and began a journey into adulthood, not without friends and supporters along the way, but fundamentally alone in the challenges he faced and embraced to alchemize a coherent worldview from the elements of radically divergent cultures.

In one of his most triumphant poems Trungpa asserts:

> There is a significant proclamation:
> Chögyam was born as peasant's kid
> But he is willing to die as the universal monarch.
>
> [Aurora 7 (# 1)]

This is perhaps the ultimate expression of loneliness, transformed from total deprivation to total self-possession. The transformation is akin to Yeats':

> When such as I cast out remorse
> So great a sweetness flows into the breast . . .
> We are blest by everything
> Everything we look upon is blest.

Trungpa elsewhere describes what he calls the "king's view," the sense of elevation that permits one to survey all of space and time and feel sovereign of one's own life and its possibilities. In much of Trungpa's poetry we feel him being the artist-king, vividly imagining, "finger painting" as he liked to say, an ideal world and his own ideal presence in it. A supreme if rather shocking example of such imagining, mixing myth, memory, and desire, is the poem addressed to his horse, "Maestoso Drala."

Yet poetry is also a refuge for Trungpa, perhaps the only place where he is able to step out of all the roles and self-inventions and speak truthfully from—and to—his own heart:

> Wounded son—
> How sad.
> Never expected this.
>
> [Wait and Think]

Through his poems he gives voice to vulnerabilities, pain, disappointment, and anger. This emotional honesty is the "open secret" of Trungpa's poetry that will especially reward his many devotees, I think, if they will grant Rinpoche his loneliness and his personal struggles and listen to the poems with an ear free from preconceived idealizations. By way of example, look at a snippet from the intensely devotional poem called (revealingly) "Exposé," in which—in the same breath—Trungpa both doubts himself and one-ups the normally sacrosanct forefathers of his teaching lineage:

> At least look at us the way we are,
> Which may not be the most you expect of us,
> But we have the greatest devotion,
> Beyond your preconceptions.

These are sentiments one would have looked long and hard to find expressed elsewhere, not only in Trungpa's formal teachings but even in his intimate conversation. That they can be found in his poetry constitutes a revelation, and a gift of his essential humanity from a leader who over the years progressively diminished his availability for simple human exchange and elevated his persona into the realm of the superhuman.

If loneliness is one touchstone of Rinpoche's poetry and nature, passion is the other:

> Let us dissolve in the realm of passion,
> Which is feared by the theologians and lawmakers.
> Pluck, pluck, pluck, pluck the wildflower.
>
> [Off Beat]

Authentic presence in the space of our lives, Rinpoche instructs, is only achievable through a passionate contact, and a dissolving, with the raw energies of life—the brilliant, the irritating, the stuff that doesn't conform to hope or expectation. Seamus Heaney speaks of "Big soft buffetings that come at the car sideways / And catch the heart off guard and blow it open." In Rinpoche's car, the buffetings are as likely to be acid as soft:

> Glory be to the rain
> That brought down
> Concentrated pollution
> On the roof of my car
> In the parking lot.
>
> [Glorious Bhagavad-Ghetto]

Pleasurable or painful, the point is to touch and be touched by what Trungpa sometimes called "the real reality"—

> I appreciate the ruggedness and the beauty of the universe,
> Which is sometimes cruel, developing sharp thorns of
> cactus,
> And sometimes beautiful chrysanthemums of fantastic
> scent.
>
> [Memorial in Verse]

In Trungpa's world, loneliness and passion are intimately connected. There is a principle of transformation or transmutation by which the feeling of lack is alchemized into positive energy. This principle is embodied in the beautiful "Invoking the Rigden Father," in which tears, heartbreak, thirst, jealousy, and intimidation are successively transformed into creativity, tenderness, courage, genuineness, and confidence. It is also especially vivid in the poem "I Miss You So Much," in which Trungpa names his closest human connections—his favorite disciple, his son, his wife, his mistress—all of whom are absent as he composes the poem, and transforms the felt texture of his missing of each into a strength: clarity, energy, the power of speech, passion. He concludes:

The pain of the delight
Lights up the universe
Choicelessly I remain as flaming vajra.

[I Miss You So Much]

This "flaming vajra" is the essential, transmutable, and transmuting fire that animates the different guises by which Trungpa lived and manifested, infusing his passion into archetypal patterns as Teacher, Lover, Leader, Devotee, and all-purpose Sage and Cynic. All of these archetypes are summoned in his poetry. The organization of this book seeks to reflect or evoke these different energies. It is my hope that this quasi-thematic plan will assist readers, especially those with little previous acquaintance with Trungpa Rinpoche, in finding their way into the poems. Having said that, I must emphasize that the themes and the selections are entirely my own and are to a degree arbitrary, as the actual poems are living organisms that escape such editorial pigeonholing.

With minor exceptions—the initial three poems and in the final section, "Sacred Songs"—the poems in each section are arranged chronologically so the reader can gain insight into how Trungpa's style and ways of seeing and responding evolved over time. All of the poems in the first six sections were composed in English, except for "The red flag flies above the Potala," "Silk Road," "Tibetan Pilgrim," "Tibetan Lyrics," and "RMDC, Route 1, Livermore," which were first written in Tibetan. Most of the "Sacred Songs" were composed in Tibetan and translated by Trungpa Rinpoche with the assistance of the Nālandā Translation Committee (which he founded for the primary purpose of translating Buddhist texts and liturgy). The exceptions, composed directly in English, are "Purifying and Invoking the Four Directions," "Invoking the Rigden Father," and "Invoking the Mother Lineage."

Trungpa was not a technician and his poems are roughed out, not highly polished. They offer little in the way of meter or rhyme. But they build on a sure sense of rhythm, a keen ear for sounds, and an inborn delight in words and the uses and misuses to which they can be put. Trained in the mantrayana, which employs pure sound as well as words as sacred instruments to evoke divine energies, Trungpa carried this method over into the secular realm. "Each word that we speak should be regarded as a gem. When we speak or talk, we should regard words

as tangible rather than purely as sounds." He spoke often of the need to appreciate "the vowels and the consonants." He composed his "Sound Cycles," which modulate from pure sounds to words and from Sanskrit to English, as training exercises for the theater group he directed in the early 1970s. Much later, toward the end of his life, with a mix of schoolmasterly discipline and impish humor, he drilled students on "proper pronounciation," by which he meant the upper-class British accent (or his version of it) that he had acquired during his years studying at Oxford. He wrote a series of "Elocution Exercises" in the form of short verses emphasizing difficult (for Americans) sounds like the slighted British *r* in the phrase "the summer odor of raw earth." A more potent example of the use of sounds and words in mantra-like fashion toward secular (and sexual) ends is the long, flutelike coda of the poem "When a cold knife is planted in your heart."

Some will find Chögyam Trungpa's verse too unpolished to qualify as great poetry. Be that as it may, I believe that attentive readers will discover that it is *real* poetry. By turns thorny and tender-hearted—like Trungpa Rinpoche himself—these poems are passionate transmutations of loneliness that invite us to taste the raw and real stuff of life:

> Chögyie is going to be pain and pleasure for all of you, . . .
> Here comes Chögyie,
> Chögyie's for all,
> Take Chögyie as yours—
> Chögyam says: Lots of love!
> I'm yours!
>
> [Aurora 7 (# 2)]

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Selected Poems

Titles in italics are first lines used as titles for untitled poems. The poetry is arranged chronologically, based on the year in which each poem was written. Abbreviations indicate the source:

FT = *First Thought Best Thought*
TR = *Timely Rain*
WS = *Warrior Songs*
RS = *Royal Songs*
Wind = *Windhorse*
VDH = *Vajradhatu Sun*

Full Moon No Clouds	*Garuda IV: The Foundations of Mindfulness.* Berkeley & London: Vajradhatu, in association with Shambhala Publications, 1976: p. 68. ©1976 by Diana J. Mukpo.
The Spontaneous Song of Entering into the Blessings and Profound Samaya of the Only Father Guru	[FT, 1–2; *Rain of Wisdom*, 286–87 (see Volume Five)]
A Son of Buddha	*Garuda V: Transcending Hesitation.* Edited by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Associate Editor, Michael H. Kohn. Boulder: Shambhala Publications, in association with Vajradhatu, n.d., p. 67.
Stray Dog	[FT, 3; TR, 10]
Garuda Is the Mighty Force	[WS, 1; TR, 139]
The Song of the Wanderer	[FT, 4]
May the Great Revolutionary Banner	[WS, 2]
The Wind of Karma	[RS, 4; TR, 140]
Poem	*Garuda V: Transcending Hesitation.* Edited by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Associate Editor, Michael H. Kohn. Boulder: Shambhala Publications, in association with Vajradhatu, n.d., p. 79.
Listen, Listen	[FT, 5]
Three-Bladed Missile	[*Mudra* (see Volume One); WS, 3; TR, 16–17]
Whistling Grasses of the Esk Valley	[FT, 6–7; TR, 18–19]

This Marriage	*Kalapa Journal* II (1999).
Song	[FT, 8]
In the North of the Sky	[FT, 9–10; TR, 20–22]
Good-bye and Welcome	[FT, 11; TR, 23]
Meteoric Iron Mountain	[FT, 12; TR 27–28]
The Zen Teacher	[FT, 13; TR, 45]
American Good Intentions	[FT, 14–15]
First Thought	[FT, 17–18]
Samsara and Nirvana	[FT, 19; TR, 46]
Gain and Loss	[FT, 21; TR, 47]
Cynical Letter	[FT, 23; TR, 48]
Dignified Rocky Mountain	[FT, 24]
Charnel Ground	*Garuda III: Dharmas without Blame.* Boulder & Berkeley: Vajradhatu, in association with Shambhala Publications, 1973, p. 67.
Philosopher Fool	[FT, 25–26; TR, 49–50]
Does Love Kill Anybody?	[FT, 27–28; TR, 109–11]
Our Seduction	[Wind]
A Letter to Marpa	[FT, 29; TR, 29–30]
Aphorisms	[FT, 31–32; TR 51–52]
The Nameless Child	[FT, 33–34; TR 53–54]
The Myth of Freedom	[FT, 35–36]
Haiku	[FT, 37; TR, 55]
The Red Flag Flies	[FT, 38; TR, 5]
The Sword of Hatred	[FT, 39]
Silk Road	[FT, 41; TR, 3]
Tibetan Pilgrim	[FT, 42; TR, 4]
Trans World Air	[FT, 43]
A Flower Is Always Happy	[FT, 44; TR 56]
True Tantra Groupie	[FT, 45–46]
Glorious Bhagavad-Ghetto	[FT, 47; TR, 57–58]

Tail of the Tiger [FT, 48]

Naropa Institute, 1974 [FT, 49–54]

Pema Yumtso [FT, 55–56]

To Britain's Health FT, 57–59; TR, 67–70]

Lion Roars Sunset over Rockies' East Slope — Chögyam Trungpa and Allen Ginsberg. *Loka: A Journal from Naropa Institute,* edited by Rick Fields, pp. 72–75. © 1975 by Nalanda Foundation / Naropa Institute. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

Supplication to the Emperor [FT, 60–61; TR, 31–33]

Literal Mathematics [FT, 62–63; TR, 59–61]

One Way [FT, 64]

Shasta Road [FT, 65]

Palm Is [FT, 66–67; TR, 71–72]

Burdensome [FT, 68; TR, 62]

Tsöndrü Namkha [FT, 69–70; TR, 73–74]

Pema Semma [FT, 71–72; TR, 75–77]

Dying Laughing [FT, 73–74; TR, 78–79]

Künga Garma [FT, 75–77]

1111 Pearl Street: Victory Chatter [FT, 79–80; WS, 4; TR, 141–43]

Wait and Think [FT, 81–82; TR, 80–81]

Missing the Point [FT, 83–84; TR, 82–83]

RMDC, Route 1, Livermore [FT, 85; TR, 34]

To Gesar of Ling [FT, 87]

Love's Fool [FT, 88–89; TR, 112–13]

Report from Loveland [FT, 90–91; TR, 114–16]

Testimonial — *Loka II: A Journal from Naropa Institute,* edited by Rick Fields, p. 155. © 1976 by Nalanda Foundation / Naropa Institute. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

1018 Spruce Street (and K.A.) [FT, 92–94; TR, 117–19]

1135 10th Street (and G.M.)	[FT, 95–96; TR, 84–85]
1111 Pearl Street (and D.S.)	[FT, 97; TR 86]
78 Fifth Avenue	[FT, 98–99; TR, 120–22]
The Alden (and Thomas Frederick)	[FT, 101; TR, 87–88]
Commentary on "The Alden (and Thomas Frederick)"	[FT, 102–5]
Aurora 7 (#1)	[RS, 2; TR, 89–90]
Aurora 7(#2)	[FT, 106–7; TR, 144–45]
1111 Pearl Street: Off Beat	[FT, 108; TR, 123–24]
Aurora 7 (and Nyingje Sheltri)	[FT, 109–11; TR, 125–28]
Shambhala Anthem	[RS, 3]
Pan-American Dharmadhatu III	[FT, 112–113]
So Bright and So Vulnerable	[RS, 4]
Glory Be to the Kasung	[WS, 6]
Tibetan Lyrics	[FT, 114]
Asleep and Awake	[FT, 115]
Conspicuous Gallantry	[RS, 5]
Great Eastern Daughterlet	[FT, 116]
Whycocomagh?	[FT, 117–18; TR, 91–92]
Lion's Roar	[FT, 119]
Halifax	[WS, 7]
Latest Early Conclusion	[RS, 6]
Timely Rain	[FT, 120; TR, 35]
Pan-Dharmadollar	[FT, 121–23]
Meetings with Remarkable People	[FT, 124–25]
International Affairs: The Cosmic Joke of 1977	[FT, 126–29]
One Sound	[FT, 150]
Dixville Notch: Purrington House (and C.F.)	[FT, 131–34; TR, 129–33]

Afterthought [FT, 135; TR, 36]

Anniversary [RS, 7]

Don't Confuse This for Trick-or-Treat [FT, 136–39]

Eternal Guest [FT, 140]

Swallowing the Sun and Moon without Leaving the World in Darkness: Good Lady of Wisdom [FT, 141–43]

Saddharma Punsters [FT, 144–46]

Falling in Love with a Pair of Handcuffs [Wind]

I Miss You So Much [FT, 147; TR, 134]

The Doha of Confidence: Sad Song of the Four Remembrances [FT, 149–50; RW, 289]

Bon Voyage [FT, 151; TR, 135]

Memorial in Verse [FT, 152–54; RS, 8; TR, 146–49]

To My Son [FT, 155; TR, 93]

For Anne Waldman [FT, 156]

As Long as the Sky Is Blue [Wind]

Putting Up with the Trans-Canada [FT, 157]

Buddhism in the Canadian Rockies [FT, 158–60]

Praise to the Lady of the Big Heart [FT, 161]

Not Deceiving the Earth (and M.S.N.) [FT, 162–63; TR, 94–95]

Maestoso Drala [WS, 8; TR, 150–52]

Trooping the Color [WS, 9; TR, 153]

Drunken Elephant [FT, 164]

Limp and Talk [FT, 165]

How to Know No [FT, 166–68]

International Affairs of 1979: Uneventful but Energy-Consuming [FT, 169–71; TR, 96–99]

To the Noble Sangha	[FT, 172]
Auspicious Coincidence: Wealth and Vision	[WS, 10]
Fishing Wisely	[FT, 173; TR, 37]
Good Morning within the Good Morning	[WS, 11; TR, 154–55]
Haiku 2	[WS, 12; TR, 156–58]
Miscellaneous Doha	[FT, 174]
Exposé: Acknowledging Accusations in the Name of Devotion	[FT, 175–77; TR, 38–40]
Mixed Grill Dharma Served with Burgundy of Ground Mahamudra 1980 Vintage: The Elegant Feast of Timeless Accuracy	[FT, 178–80]
Growing Pains Are Over	[FT, 181]
Coming of Age of My Son	[FT, 182–83]
Mantric Keltic Incantation	[RS, 9]
Merrier Than the Maritimes	[*Shambhala Centre Banner* 3, no. 5 (September 1994): 12–13]
La Conference du Soleil du Grand Est	[VDH, 3]
Turning Point	[RS, 10; TR, 159]
You Might Be Tired of the Seat That You Deserve	[FT, 185–86]
When I Ride a Horse	[FT, 187; TR, 64]
Hunting the Setting-Sun Moon	[VDH, 17]
Timely Innuendo	[FT, 188]
Why Reality Is So Real	[Wind]
Fearlessness and Joy Are Truly Yours	[VDH, 18]
A Heart Lost and Discovered	[FT, 189; TR, 41]
Command	[FT, 190; TR, 160]
Golden Sun	[FT, 191; TR, 161]

As Skylarks Hunt for Their Prey	[FT, 192; TR, 42]
How to Be Old Shambhalians and Youthful Propagators of Shambhala	[RS, 11; TR, 162–63]
How Typical Student Poetry Should Be	[VDH, 17; in *The Essential Chögyam Trungpa*. Edited by Carolyn Rose Gimian. Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 1999, pp. 101–102. © 1999 By Diana J. Mukpo.]
Death or Life	[RS, 12]
Early Testimony: Sun Will Never Set	[Vajradhatu Archives brochure, 1999]
Warmth in the House	[RS, 13]
Don't Go to the Dentist with Such Good Teeth	[with the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin, *The Kalapa Journal* 3 (May 2001)]
Natural Sanctuary without Shrine	[Wind]
Child's Concept of Death	[WS, 11; TR, 164]
Battle Cry	[WS, 14]
Farewell to Boulder	[RS, 14]
Sanity Is Joyful	[WS, 15]
Shambhala Is True	[RS, 15]
Embryonic Thunderbolt	[WS, 16]
How to Govern with Wisdom	[WS, 17]
Seasons' Greetings	[FT, 193; TR, 100]
Dance while Weeping	[*The Kalapa Journal* 3 (May 2001)]
Four Season Haiku Tiger	[Wind]
The Meek: Powerfully Nonchalant and Dangerously Self-satisfying	[FT: 194–95; TR, 165–66]
Swallowing the Moon as We Feel Free	[Wind]
Constantly Falling in Love	[*The Kalapa Journal* 2 (1999): 66]
Never Flinching	[Wind]

Pure and Powerful as Peonies [*Kalapa Ikebana Newsletter* 8 (Summer/Fall 1985): 1]

Sound Cycles [TR, 203–5]
Trishula
Sutra
Aham

Elocution Exercises [TR, 207–8]
Instead of Americanism, Speak the English Language Properly!
Humor and Delight with the English Language
Playing with the English Language

SELECTED WRITINGS

"Art and Education: A public talk given at Naropa Institute by Vajracharya the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, June 24, 1979." *The Vajradhatu Sun* 1, no. 6 (August/September 1979): 21, 28. © 1979 by Diana J. Mukpo.

"Art of Simplicity: 'Discovering Elegance.'" *The Vajradhatu Sun* (December 1988 / January 1989): 8. © 1981 by The Vajradhatu Sun.

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Introduction to *Disciples of the Buddha* by Robert Newman. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Cool Grove Press, 2001. Introduction ©2000 by Diana J. Mukpo. Used by permission.

"Perception and the Appreciation of Reality." *Kalapa Ikebana Newsletter* (Winter 1984): 1–2. © 1984, Diana J. Mukpo.

"Poetics," with Allen Ginsberg. *Shambhala Sun* (January/February 1993): 56–58. © 1993 by Diana J. Mukpo.

"Poets' Colloquium," by William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, W. S. Merwin, Chögyam Trungpa, Anne Waldman, and Philip Whalen, with Rick Fields, David Rome, and Joshua Zim. *Loka II: A Journal from Naropa Institute.* Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976, pp. 164–75. ©1976 by Nalanda Foundation/Naropa Institute. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

"Prajna." *Loka: A Journal from Naropa Institute.* Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975, pp. 139–43. ©1976 by Diana J. Mukpo. Used by permission.

Proclamation. A play by the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, performed by the Mudra Theater Group, Midsummer Day, 1980. *The Vajradhatu Sun* 2, no. 6 (August/September 1980). © 1980 by Diana J. Mukpo.

"Testimonial." *Loka II: A Journal from Naropa Institute.* Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976, p. 155. ©1976 by Nalanda Foundation/Naropa Institute. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

"Tibetan Poetics." *Loka II: A Journal from Naropa Institute.* Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976, pp. 153–54. ©1976 by Nalanda Foundation/Naropa Institute. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

"Visual Dharma: Film Workshop on the Tibetan Buddhist View of Aesthetics and Filmmaking." *Chicago Review* 24, no. 3 (Winter 1972): 77–89. © 1972 by Diana J. Mukpo. Used by permission.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MANY PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED to the writings that make up Volume Seven of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa.* Overall, for their contributions to Chögyam Trungpa's poetry, first and foremost I would like to acknowledge David I. Rome and Allen Ginsberg, whose involvement with Trungpa Rinpoche's poetry is discussed in the introduction. In addition to Allen Ginsberg, thanks are due to all the other poets, especially those at Naropa, who influenced Chögyam Trungpa's work as a poet and as a dharma teacher. Special thanks to Anne Waldman, who had a long poetic and dharmic relationship with Chögyam Trungpa. I would also like to thank John Castlebury, both for publishing Chögyam Trungpa's work in the *Windhorse* broadside and for having organized and entered all the poems of Chögyam Trungpa onto the computer, which is a great help to those working with his poetry. Thanks also to James Gimian of *Trident Publications*, the publisher of *Warrior Songs* and *Royal Songs* for his commitment to those projects. From earlier days, I would also like to thank Beverley Webster, Connie Berman, and Helen Green who worked for Chögyam Trungpa in the Office of the President at Vajradhatu, where they gathered together, retyped, filed, and made available the poetry of Chögyam Trungpa during the last ten years of his life. During this period Richard Roth and Sarah Coleman helped to edit the poetry of Chögyam Trungpa; thanks to them for their efforts as well. To the many other unknown and unnamed persons who helped to type, edit, and keep track of Rinpoche's poems, we also owe a debt of gratitude. In England, Richard Arthure worked with the poetry. He was a primary editor of *Mudra*. There were others, now unknown, and we can be grateful to all who helped.

There are a great number of people who worked with Chögyam Trungpa on dharma art and his various artistic creations and enterprises. The attempt to list them all is bound to fail, so I will limit myself here to a general acknowledgment and a bow of thanks to the many, many people who worked with Chögyam Trungpa, learned from him, and in many cases helped him to learn about various areas of artistic work. For their specific help in the preparation of Volume Seven, I would like to thank Johanna Demetrakas, Baird Bryant, Lee Worley, Jean-Claude van Itallie, David I. Rome, Andy Karr, Johanna Rotte, Jean Thies, Ludwig Turzanski, Gina Etra Stick, Karen Hayward, and Judith Lief. For help in obtaining copies of the *Kalapa Journal*, thanks to Hudson Shotwell and Richard Peisinger. For the introduction in *Disciples of the Buddha*, I would like to thank both Robert Newman and his publisher Tej Hazarika of Cool Grove Press. Robert and I reconnected, and Tej and I met over a misunderstanding and became friends. For permission to quote lines of poetry by the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin, I would like to thank Mrs. Lila Rich. These appear as lines alternating with Chögyam Trungpa's in "Don't Go to the Dentist with Such Good Teeth."

The founding of Naropa Institute in 1974 provided an important venue for artists, intellectuals, and meditators to come together, and many interesting collaborations arose out of those encounters. To Rick Fields and all those who helped to document this early era, I offer another bow of thanks. The two volumes of *Loka*, the journal of Naropa Institute published in 1975 and 1976, were terrific cultural documents, showing the wide range of interactions and interests that flowered at Naropa.

More than with any other material in *The Collected Works*, I found that Volume Seven was a personal journey of discovery. In the course of familiarizing myself with the materials in Volume Seven and gathering background information for the introduction, I came to have a deep appreciation for those who worked with Chögyam Trungpa in the area of art. They have great stories, information, and wisdom to share, and I hope that they will find many ways to do so in the future, sooner than later, as we all grow older.

Thanks also to Judith Lief for her work as the editor on both *The Art of Calligraphy* and *Dharma Art*. Until these two posthumous volumes were published, there was a true dearth of material about this aspect of Chögyam Trungpa's oeuvre. Particular thanks to Mrs. Lief for under-

standing the importance of this work and the need to make it available. Hazel Bercholz at Shambhala Publications worked on the design of these publications and deserves thanks for her excellent contributions to both of these books.

Fabrice Midal has been very helpful to me in gathering information on dharma art and on Trungpa Rinpoche as an artist. His excellent book, *Trungpa* (published in English as *Chögyam Trungpa*), was a great aid. More than that, conversations and e-mails between Fabrice and me were very helpful in deepening my understanding of this topic, as was Fabrice's review of the introduction to Volume Seven. Thanks also to Larry Mermelstein for helpful comments on the introduction.

Once again, I would like to thank Shambhala Publications for its support of this project and specifically the in-house editor for this multivolume series, Kendra Crossen Burroughs, for her patience, her perceptiveness, and her perseverance. Helen Berliner, indexer extraordinaire, shines in the indexing of this work of dharma art. Perhaps this is because she is an accomplished artist herself and has been a student-practitioner of dharma art for many years.

Finally, to Diana Judith Mukpo, thanks for generous and unfailing support for the publication of the works of her late husband. To Chögyam Trungpa, whose entire life was a magnificent work of art, what appropriate thanks can one offer? Let us strive to follow his example by opening our eyes and hearts, so that we can see the majesty and power of the world as he did. If more people shared his perception, the world would be a different place indeed.

A BIOGRAPHY OF CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

THE VENERABLE CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA was born in the province of Kham in eastern Tibet in 1939. When be was just thirteen months old, Chögyam Trungpa was recognized as a major tulku, or incarnate teacher. According to Tibetan tradition, an enlightened teacher is capable, based on his or her vow of compassion, of reincarnating in human form over a succession of generations. Before dying, such a teacher may leave a letter or other clues to the whereabouts of the next incarnation. Later, students and other realized teachers look through these clues and, based on those plus a careful examination of dreams and visions, conduct searches to discover and recognize the successor. Thus, particular lines of teaching are formed, in some cases extending over many centuries. Chögyam Trungpa was the eleventh in the teaching lineage known as the Trungpa Tulkus.

Once young tulkus are recognized, they enter a period of intensive training in the theory and practice of the Buddhist teachings. Trungpa Rinpoche, after being enthroned as supreme abbot of Surmang Monastery and governor of Surmang District, began a period of training that would last eighteen years, until his departure from Tibet in 1959. As a Kagyü tulku, his training was based on the systematic practice of meditation and on refined theoretical understanding of Buddhist philosophy. One of the four great lineages of Tibet, the Kagyü is known as the practicing (or practice) lineage.

At the age of eight, Trungpa Rinpoche received ordination as a novice monk. Following this, he engaged in intensive study and practice of the traditional monastic disciplines, including traditional Tibetan poetry and

monastic dance. His primary teachers were Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen and Khenpo Gangshar—leading teachers in the Nyingma and Kagyü lineages. In 1958, at the age of eighteen, Trungpa Rinpoche completed his studies, receiving the degrees of kyorpön (doctor of divinity) and khenpo (master of studies). He also received full monastic ordination.

The late fifties were a time of great upheaval in Tibet. As it became clear that the Chinese communists intended to take over the country by force, many people, both monastic and lay, fled the country. Trungpa Rinpoche spent many harrowing months trekking over the Himalayas (described later in his book *Born in Tibet*). After narrowly escaping capture by the Chinese, he at last reached India in 1959. While in India, Trungpa Rinpoche was appointed to serve as spiritual adviser to the Young Lamas Home School in Delhi, India. He served in this capacity from 1959 to 1963.

Trungpa Rinpoche's opportunity to emigrate to the West came when he received a Spaulding sponsorship to attend Oxford University. At Oxford he studied comparative religion, philosophy, history, and fine arts. He also studied Japanese flower arranging, receiving a degree from the Sogetsu School. While in England, Trungpa Rinpoche began to instruct Western students in the dharma, and in 1967 he founded the Samye Ling Meditation Center in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. During this period, he also published his first two books, both in English: *Born in Tibet* (1966) and *Meditation in Action* (1969).

In 1968 Trungpa Rinpoche traveled to Bhutan, where he entered into a solitary meditation retreat. While on retreat, Rinpoche received[1] a pivotal text for all of his teaching in the West, "The Sadhana of Mahamudra," a text that documents the spiritual degeneration of modern times and its antidote, genuine spirituality that leads to the experience of naked and luminous mind. This retreat marked a pivotal change in his approach to teaching. Soon after returning to England, he became a layperson, putting aside his monastic robes and dressing in ordinary Western

1. In Tibet, there is a well-documented tradition of teachers discovering or "receiving" texts that are believed to have been buried, some of them in the realm of space, by Padmasambhava, who is regarded as the father of Buddhism in Tibet. Teachers who find what Padmasambhava left hidden for the beings of future ages, which may be objects or physical texts hidden in rocks, lakes, and other locations, are referred to as tertöns, and the materials they find are known as terma. Chögyam Trungpa was already known as a tertön in Tibet.

attire. In 1970 he married a young Englishwoman, Diana Pybus, and together they left Scotland and moved to North America. Many of his early students and his Tibetan colleagues found these changes shocking and upsetting. However, he expressed a conviction that in order for the dharma to take root in the West, it needed to be taught free from cultural trappings and religious fascination.

During the seventies, America was in a period of political and cultural ferment. It was a time of fascination with the East. Nevertheless, almost from the moment he arrived in America, Trungpa Rinpoche drew many students to him who were seriously interested in the Buddhist teachings and the practice of meditation. However, he severely criticized the materialistic approach to spirituality that was also quite prevalent, describing it as a "spiritual supermarket." In his lectures, and in his books *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (1973) and *The Myth of Freedom* (1976), he pointed to the simplicity and directness of the practice of sitting meditation as the way to cut through such distortions of the spiritual journey.

During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, Trungpa Rinpoche developed a reputation as a dynamic and controversial teacher. He was a pioneer, one of the first Tibetan Buddhist teachers in North America, preceding by some years and indeed facilitating the later visits by His Holiness the Karmapa, His Holiness Khyentse Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and many others. In the United States, he found a spiritual kinship with many Zen masters, who were already presenting Buddhist meditation. In the very early days, he particularly connected with Suzuki Roshi, the founder of Zen Center in San Francisco. In later years he was close with Kobun Chino Roshi and Bill Kwong Roshi in Northern California; with Maezumi Roshi, the founder of the Los Angeles Zen Center; and with Eido Roshi, abbot of the New York Zendo Shobo-ji.

Fluent in the English language, Chögyam Trungpa was one of the first Tibetan Buddhist teachers who could speak to Western students directly, without the aid of a translator. Traveling extensively throughout North America and Europe, he gave thousands of talks and hundred of seminars. He established major centers in Vermont, Colorado, and Nova Scotia, as well as many smaller meditation and study centers in cities throughout North America and Europe. Vajradhatu was formed in 1973 as the central administrative body of this network.

In 1974 Trungpa Rinpoche founded the Naropa Institute (now Naropa

University), which became the first and only accredited Buddhist-inspired university in North America. He lectured extensively at the institute, and his book *Journey without Goal* (1981) is based on a course he taught there. In 1976 he established the Shambhala Training program, a series of seminars that present a nonsectarian path of spiritual warriorship grounded in the practice of sitting meditation. His book *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (1984) gives an overview of the Shambhala teachings.

In 1976 Trungpa Rinpoche appointed Ösel Tendzin (Thomas F. Rich) as his Vajra Regent, or dharma heir. Ösel Tendzin worked closely with Trungpa Rinpoche in the administration of Vajradhatu and Shambhala Training. He taught extensively from 1976 until his death in 1990 and is the author of *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand.*

Trungpa Rinpoche was also active in the field of translation. Working with Francesca Fremantle, he rendered a new translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead,* which was published in 1975. Later he formed the Nālandā Translation Committee in order to translate texts and liturgies for his own students as well as to make important texts available publicly.

In 1979 Trungpa Rinpoche conducted a ceremony empowering his eldest son, Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo, as his successor in the Shambhala lineage. At that time he gave him the title of Sawang ("Earth Lord").

Trungpa Rinpoche was also known for his interest in the arts and particularly for his insights into the relationship between contemplative discipline and the artistic process. Two books published since his death—*The Art of Calligraphy* (1994) and *Dharma Art* (1996)—present this aspect of his work. His own artwork included calligraphy, painting, flower arranging, poetry, playwriting, and environmental installations. In addition, at the Naropa Institute he created an educational atmosphere that attracted many leading artists and poets. The exploration of the creative process in light of contemplative training continues there as a provocative dialogue. Trungpa Rinpoche also published two books of poetry: *Mudra* (1972) and *First Thought Best Thought* (1983). In 1998 a retrospective compilation of his poetry, *Timely Rain,* was published.

Shortly before his death, in a meeting with Samuel Bercholz, the publisher of Shambhala Publications, Chögyam Trungpa expressed his interest in publishing 108 volumes of his teachings, to be called the Dharma Ocean Series. "Dharma Ocean" is the translation of Chögyam Trungpa's Tibetan teaching name, Chökyi Gyatso. The Dharma Ocean Series was

to consist primarily of material edited to allow readers to encounter this rich array of teachings simply and directly rather than in an overly systematized or condensed form. In 1991 the first posthumous volume in the series, *Crazy Wisdom*, was published, and since then another seven volumes have appeared.

Trungpa Rinpoche's published books represent only a fraction of the rich legacy of his teachings. During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, he crafted the structures necessary to provide his students with thorough, systematic training in the dharma. From introductory talks and courses to advanced group retreat practices, these programs emphasized a balance of study and practice, of intellect and intuition. *Trungpa* by Fabrice Midal, a French biography (forthcoming in English translation under the title *Chögyam Trungpa*), details the many forms of training that Chögyam Trungpa developed. Since Trungpa Rinpoche's death, there have been significant changes in the training offered by the organizations he founded. However, many of the original structures remain in place, and students can pursue their interest in meditation and the Buddhist path through these many forms of training. Senior students of Trungpa Rinpoche continue to be involved in both teaching and meditation instruction in such programs.

In addition to his extensive teachings in the Buddhist tradition, Trungpa Rinpoche also placed great emphasis on the Shambhala teachings, which stress the importance of meditation in action, synchronizing mind and body, and training oneself to approach obstacles or challenges in everyday life with the courageous attitude of a warrior, without anger. The goal of creating an enlightened society is fundamental to the Shambhala teachings. According to the Shambhala approach, the realization of an enlightened society comes not purely through outer activity, such as community or political involvement, but from appreciation of the senses and the sacred dimension of day-to-day life. A second volume of these teachings, entitled *Great Eastern Sun*, was published in 1999.

Chögyam Trungpa died in 1987, at the age of forty-seven. By the time of his death, he was known not only as Rinpoche ("Precious Jewel") but also as Vajracharya ("Vajra Holder") and as Vidyadhara ("Wisdom Holder") for his role as a master of the vajrayana, or tantric teachings of Buddhism. As a holder of the Shambhala teachings, he had also received the titles of Dorje Dradül ("Indestructible Warrior") and Sakyong ("Earth Protector"). He is survived by his wife, Diana Judith Mukpo, and

five sons. His eldest son, the Sawang Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo, succeeds him as the spiritual head of Vajradhatu. Acknowledging the importance of the Shambhala teachings to his father's work, the Sawang changed the name of the umbrella organization to Shambhala, with Vajradhatu remaining one of its major divisions. In 1995 the Sawang received the Shambhala title of Sakyong like his father before him and was also confirmed as an incarnation of the great ecumenical teacher Mipham Rinpoche.

Trungpa Rinpoche is widely acknowledged as a pivotal figure in introducing the buddhadharma to the Western world. He joined his great appreciation for Western culture with his deep understanding of his own tradition. This led to a revolutionary approach to teaching the dharma, in which the most ancient and profound teachings were presented in a thoroughly contemporary way. Trungpa Rinpoche was known for his fearless proclamation of the dharma: free from hesitation, true to the purity of the tradition, and utterly fresh. May these teachings take root and flourish for the benefit of all sentient beings.

BOOKS BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

Born in Tibet (George Allen & Unwin, 1966; Shambhala Publications, 1977)

Chögyam Trungpa's account of his upbringing and education as an incarnate lama in Tibet and the powerful story of his escape to India. An epilogue added in 1976 details Trungpa Rinpoche's time in England in the 1960s and his early years in North America.

Meditation in Action (Shambhala Publications, 1969)

Using the life of the Buddha as a starting point, this classic on meditation and the practice of compassion explores the six paramitas, or enlightened actions on the Buddhist path. Its simplicity and directness make this an appealing book for beginners and seasoned meditators alike.

Mudra (Shambhala Publications, 1972)

This collection of poems mostly written in the 1960s in England also includes two short translations of Buddhist texts and a commentary on the ox-herding pictures, well-known metaphors for the journey on the Buddhist path.

Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism (Shambhala Publications, 1973)

The first volume of Chögyam Trungpa's teaching in America is still fresh, outrageous, and up to date. It describes landmarks on the Buddhist path and focuses on the pitfalls of materialism that plague the modern age.

The Dawn of Tantra, by Herbert V. Guenther and Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala Publications, 1975)

Jointly authored by Chögyam Trungpa and Buddhist scholar Herbert V. Guenther, this volume presents an introduction to the Buddhist teachings of tantra.

Glimpses of Abhidharma (Shambhala Publications, 1975)

An exploration of the five skandhas, or stages in the development of ego, based on an early seminar given by Chögyam Trungpa. The final chapter on auspicious coincidence is a penetrating explanation of karma and the true experience of spiritual freedom.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo, translated with commentary by Francesca Fremantle and Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala Publications, 1975)

Chögyam Trungpa and Francesca Fremantle collaborated on the translation of this important text by Guru Rinpoche, as discovered by Karma Lingpa, and are coauthors of this title. Trungpa Rinpoche provides a powerful commentary on death and dying and on the text itself, which allows modern readers to find the relevance of this ancient guide to the passage from life to death and back to life again.

The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation (Shambhala Publications, 1976)

In short, pithy chapters that exemplify Chögyam Trungpa's hard-hitting and compelling teaching style, this book explores the meaning of freedom and genuine spirituality in the context of traveling the Buddhist path.

The Rain of Wisdom (Shambhala Publications, 1980)

An extraordinary collection of the poetry or songs of the teachers of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, to which Chögyam Trungpa belonged. The text was translated by the Nālandā Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa. The volume includes an extensive glossary of Buddhist terms.

Journey without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha (Shambhala Publications, 1981)

Based on an early seminar at the Naropa Institute, this guide to the tantric teachings of Buddhism is provocative and profound, emphasizing both the dangers and the wisdom of the vajrayana, the diamond path of Buddhism.

The Life of Marpa the Translator (Shambhala Publications, 1982)

A renowned teacher of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition who combined scholarship and meditative realization, Marpa made three arduous journeys to India to collect the teachings of the Kagyü lineage and bring them to Tibet. Chögyam Trungpa and the Nālandā Translation Committee have produced an inspiring translation of his life's story.

First Thought Best Thought: 108 Poems (Shambhala Publications, 1983)

This collection consists mainly of poetry written during Chögyam Trungpa's first ten years in North America, showing his command of the American idiom, his understanding of American culture, as well as his playfulness and his passion. Some poems from earlier years were also included. Many of the poems from *First Thought Best Thought* were later reprinted in *Timely Rain*.

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior (Shambhala Publications, 1984)

Chögyam Trungpa's classic work on the path of warriorship still offers timely advice. This book shows how an attitude of fearlessness and open heart provides the courage to meet the challenges of modern life.

Crazy Wisdom (Shambhala Publications, 1991)

Two seminars from the 1970s were edited for this volume on the life and teachings of Guru Rinpoche, or Padmasambhava, the founder of Buddhism in Tibet.

The Heart of the Buddha (Shambhala Publications, 1991)

A collection of essays, talks, and seminars present the teachings of Buddhism as they relate to everyday life.

Orderly Chaos: The Mandala Principle (Shambhala Publications, 1991)

The mandala is often thought of as a Buddhist drawing representing tantric iconography. However, Chögyam Trungpa explores how both confusion and enlightenment are made up of patterns of orderly chaos

that are the basis for the principle of mandala. A difficult but rewarding discussion of the topic of chaos and its underlying structure.

Secret Beyond Thought: The Five Chakras and the Four Karmas (Vajradhatu Publications, 1991)

Two talks from an early seminar on the principles of the chakras and the karmas, teachings from the Buddhist tantric tradition.

The Lion's Roar: An Introduction to Tantra (Shambhala Publications, 1992)

An in-depth presentation of the nine yanas, or stages, of the path in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Particularly interesting are the chapters on visualization and the five buddha families.

Transcending Madness. The Experience of the Six Bardos (Shambhala Publications, 1992)

The editor of this volume, Judith L. Lief, calls it "a practical guide to Buddhist psychology." The book is based on two early seminars on the intertwined ideas of bardo (or the gap in experience and the gap between death and birth) and the six realms of being.

Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness (Shambhala Publications, 1993)

This volume presents fifty-nine slogans, or aphorisms related to meditation practice, which show a practical path to making friends with oneself and developing compassion for others, through the practice of sacrificing self-centeredness for the welfare of others.

Glimpses of Shunyata (Vajradhatu Publications, 1993)

These four lectures on principle of shunyata, or emptiness, are an experiential exploration of the ground, path, and fruition of realizing this basic principle of mahayana Buddhism.

The Art of Calligraphy: Joining Heaven and Earth (Shambhala Publications, 1994)

Chögyam Trungpa's extensive love affair with brush and ink is showcased in this book, which also includes an introduction to dharma art and a discussion of the Eastern principles of heaven, earth, and man as applied to the creative process. The beautiful reproductions of fifty-four

calligraphies are accompanied by inspirational quotations from the author's works.

Illusion's Game: The Life and Teaching of Naropa (Shambhala Publications, 1994)

The great Indian teacher Naropa was a renowned master of the teachings of mahamudra, an advanced stage of realization in Tibetan Buddhism. This book presents Chögyam Trungpa's teachings on Naropa's life and arduous search for enlightenment.

The Path Is the Goal: A Basic Handbook of Buddhist Meditation (Shambhala Publications, 1995)

A simple and practical manual for the practice of meditation that evokes the author's penetrating insight and colorful language.

Dharma Art (Shambhala Publications, 1996)

Chögyam Trungpa was a calligrapher, painter, poet, designer, and photographer as well as a master of Buddhist meditation. Drawn from his many seminars and talks on the artistic process, this work presents his insights into art and the artist.

Timely Rain: Selected Poetry of Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala Publications, 1998)

With a foreword by Allen Ginsberg, this collection of poems was organized thematically by editor David I. Rome to show the breadth of the poet's work. Core poems from *Mudra* and *First Thought Best Thought* are reprinted here, along with many poems and "sacred songs" published here for the first time.

Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala (Shambhala Publications, 1999)

This sequel and complement to *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* offers more heartfelt wisdom on Shambhala warriorship.

Glimpses of Space: The Feminine Principle and Evam (Vajradhatu Publications, 1999)

Two seminars on the tantric understanding of the feminine and masculine principles, what they are and how they work together in vajra-

yana Buddhist practice as the nondual experience of wisdom and skillful means.

The Essential Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala Publications, 2000)

This concise overview of Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings consists of forty selections from fourteen different books, articulating the secular path of the Shambhala warrior as well as the Buddhist path of meditation and awakening.

Glimpses of Mahayana (Vajradhatu Publications, 2001)

This little volume focuses on the attributes of buddha nature, the development of compassion, and the experience of being a practitioner on the bodhisattva path of selfless action to benefit others.

RESOURCES

FOR INFORMATION regarding meditation instruction or inquiries about a practice center near you, please contact one of the following:

SHAMBHALA INTERNATIONAL
1084 Tower Road
Halifax, NS
B3H 2Y5 Canada
Telephone: (902) 425-4275, ext. 10
Fax: (902) 423-2750
Website: www.shambhala.org (This website contains information about the more than 100 meditation centers affiliated with Shambhala, the international network of Buddhist practice centers established by Chögyam Trungpa.)

SHAMBHALA EUROPE
Annostrasse 27
50678 Cologne, Germany
Telephone: 49-0-700-108-000-00
E-mail: europe@shambhala.org
Website: www.shambhala-europe.org

DORJE DENMA LING
2280 Balmoral Road
Tatamagouche, NS
B0K 1V0 Canada
Telephone: (902) 657-9085
Fax: (902) 657-0462
E-mail: info@dorjedenmaling.com
Website: www.dorjedenmaling.com

KARMÊ CHÖLING
369 Patneaude Lane
Barnet, VT 05821
Telephone: (802) 633-2384
Fax: (802) 633-3012
E-mail: karmecholing@shambhala.org

SHAMBHALA MOUNTAIN CENTER
4921 Country Road 68C
Red Feather Lakes, CO 80545
Telephone: (970) 881-2184
Fax: (970) 881-2909
E-mail: shambhalamountain@shambhala.org

SKY LAKE LODGE
P.O. Box 408
Rosendale, NY 12472
Telephone: (845) 658-8556
E-mail: skylake@shambhala.org
Website: http:file://www.sky-lake.org

DECHEN CHÖLING
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87700 St Yrieix sous Aixe
France
Telephone: 33 (0)5-55-03-55-52
Fax: 33 (0)5-55-03-91-74
E-mail: dechencholing@dechencholing.org

Audio and videotape recordings of talks and seminars by Chögyam Trungpa are available from:

KALAPA RECORDINGS
1678 Barrington Street, 2nd Floor
Halifax, NS
B3J 2A2 Canada
Telephone: (902) 421-1550
Fax: (902) 423-2750
E-mail: shop@shambhala.org
Website: www.shambhalashop.com

For publications from Shambhala International, please contact:

VAJRADHATU PUBLICATIONS
1678 Barrington Street, 2nd Floor
Halifax, NS
B3J 2A2 Canada
Telephone: (902) 421-1550
E-mail: shop@shambhala.org
Website: www.shambhalashop.com

For information about the archive of the author's work—which includes more than 5,000 audio recordings, 1,000 video recordings, original Tibetan manuscripts, correspondence, and more than 30,000 photographs—please contact:

THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES
1084 Tower Road
Halifax, NS
B3H 3S3 Canada
Telephone: (902) 421-1550
Website: www.shambhalashop.com/archives

The *Shambhala Sun* is a bimonthly Buddhist magazine founded by Chögyam Trungpa. For a subscription or sample copy, contact:

SHAMBHALA SUN
P. O. Box 3377
Champlain, NY 12919-9871
Telephone: (877) 786-1950
Website: www.shambhalasun.com

Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly is an in-depth, practice-oriented journal offering teachings from all Buddhist traditions. For a subscription or sample copy, contact:

BUDDHADHARMA
P. O. Box 3377
Champlain, NY 12919-9871
Telephone: (877) 786-1950
Website: www.thebuddhadharma.com

Naropa University is the only accredited, Buddhist-inspired university in North America. For more information, contact:

NAROPA UNIVERSITY
2130 Arapahoe Avenue
Boulder, CO 80302
Telephone: (303) 444-0202
Website: www.naropa.edu

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All books, articles, poems, seminars, and art works are attributed to Chögyam Trungpa unless otherwise cited. Only poems referenced in the text are listed in this index; for all titles, please refer to the table of contents. Illustrations are indicated by italics and follow text entries. The Nālandā Translation Committee is cited as NTC. Long excerpts of written works and collections of poems and calligraphy contained within this volume are indicated by initial page number followed by ff.

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